

**DRUGS IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA: YUNNAN AND THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE**

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## Declaration

This thesis is the author's own work, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Kirande Vamaseri



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## Abstract

This is a study of drug use in China with an emphasis on the southwestern province of Yunnan and on the Golden Triangle. For more than a thousand years, opium and other drugs have been used in China for medicinal, religious and recreational purposes. Opium was smoked for relief from pain, for relaxation, as a stimulant, and as an aid for entering a religious trance. It was also believed that opium helped to relieve the physical strain of labouring and the mental pain of homesickness. The arrival of the Europeans during the seventeenth century brought about the use of tobacco-opium mixtures (madak), which originated in the East Indies (probably Java) and is thought to have spread from there to Formosa, F~~u~~<sup>j</sup>kian and the South China coast. This led to widespread addiction in China.

Even after the Opium War in the 1850s, the opium trade and its cultivation continued because prohibition was not equally enforced throughout the different parts of China. It was not until the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 that opium use was effectively controlled. Control of the drug problem in China was strictly maintained for almost 30 years, but since 1978, the drug problem has become serious again, partly because of the shift from opium to heroin and other narcotic drugs. Drug smuggling became easier as the opening of the country to external trade allowed drug traffickers to smuggle heroin into southwestern China through the bordering regions of Burma. Control of drug growing in the China produced alternative production into the Golden Triangle.

Heavy involvement by local tribes people and Han Chinese resulted in increased drug production in the Golden Triangle, which rapidly replaced supply from China. Poppy cultivation eventually spread from Yunnan to Burma and the hill countries of Laos and Thailand, with drugs being eventually being transported to Europe and the United States. Illicit drug use became connected with complex problems of highly specialized criminal groups and organised crimes, both in Mainland China and in overseas Chinese communities. The CIA involvement in drug trafficking during the 1950s and 1960s is merely one contemporary example of drugs being used to achieve 'higher' political goals, a strategy formerly used by the British and French governments, Chinese warlords and the Kuomintang Government, and some minority warlords as well. If the government itself is actively involved in the drug trade, what hope is there of convincing local people that they should not be involved in drug trafficking?



Responses to the drug problem in China and internationally have had limited effect for various reasons, and the problem has continued to grow. Different approaches may be appropriate in different social, political and economic conditions. This thesis addresses the question of what are the different approaches of the Chinese government and its neighbouring countries? The various policies and suggestions are discussed. Another question which arises is whether the drug problem requires a response from the United States and the different Southeast Asian countries as well since they are also affected by the high rate of drug addiction, crime, and the resulting threats to social order, including health risks, rising corruption, and unemployment. This second question is beyond the scope of this thesis.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

One major problem that affects the social, health, legal, and economic sectors of life in China is drug addiction. The use of “recreational” drugs is deeply embedded in Chinese culture and is a sensitive issue that touches on many aspects of law, family and morality in China. Although China was quite successful in controlling opium and other illicit drugs from the 1950s to the late 1970s, drug abuse has emerged as a serious problem for China since 1978 with the development of the open door trade policy and economic reform. Drugs such as heroin, ‘ice’ (crystal methamphetamine), and ecstasy tablets began to appear and drug-related issues became particularly prominent in China’s southwestern Province of Yunnan, adjacent to the ‘Golden Triangle’.

Opium and heroin have been and are the most common and popular drugs in China. Heroin is derived chemically from opium but is more concentrated.<sup>1</sup> Heroin comes in many forms and people have often been unaware of its strong properties. In the past, many Chinese believed that heroin tablets could be used to cure an addiction to opium and morphine. Smokers found that heroin pills could replace opium smoking and the fact that these pills were cheaper reinforced its use. As Carnwath and Smith state in *Heroin Century*, twenty cents’ worth of heroin pills was equal to fifty cents’ worth of opium during the 1920s. This is a big difference. In fact, because of its concentration, heroin is the most dangerous of all drugs and in most countries heroin is the leading drug of abuse. Compared with heroin, opium can be categorised as mild or not serious.

There are some countries where the legal production of narcotic plants occurs. By ‘legal’, I am referring to drugs produced for medical and scientific needs, in other words, for health purposes. Opiates in the form of morphine and its derivatives are important for pain relieving or analgesic purposes. Illicit drugs are those used primarily for non-medical and

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<sup>1</sup> The final product of heroin weighs only about 10 percent of the original raw opium used. This means that 10 kilograms of raw opium produced 1 kilogram of morphine base, which turns out to a bit more than 1 kilogram of heroin through the additional ingredients gained during processing.

See the *United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) World Drug Report*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, 1997.



non-scientific purposes without legal sanction.<sup>2</sup> Legal production of opium and coca account for approximately 10% and 1% of all production. Most of the legal opium production sites lie in Australia, France, Spain, and Turkey.<sup>3</sup>

What is the nature and scale of the drug problem in China and how has it changed over time? (By 'drug problem', I mean drug-related crime, drug-taking and its harmful consequences for public health, social stability and cohesion, corruption, illegal financial flows and economic distortion, resulting from in part poverty, lack of a strong social security system, low levels of education, and ineffective policing and legal controls.) Who is involved in the drug production, consumption and the sale of drugs? What can be done about the problem? If all opium poppy cultivation was eliminated, would the drug problem be solved in China? Would attempts to eradicate heroin use by the use of another drugs only complicate things further? Can heroin be replaced by synthetic opiates? How is China tackling its drug-related problems and what are the international responses to drug crime? These are some of the major issues this thesis addresses.

In the past, most studies on drugs have been conducted on common drug abuse and initiators of drug use, particularly in the western countries. Studies have included confidential questionnaires, peer-conducted surveys, and mixed interviews. In Western societies, where opium is not as prevalent as in Asian societies, drug studies tend to focus on substance abuse as a form of deviant social behaviour. Studies have tended to associate the beginnings of drug use with alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, and peer and family pressures.<sup>4</sup> Peer pressure has been particularly identified as a major factor in increasing drug risk. Overall, however, the drug problem still requires more examination and needs to be understood in greater depth. Studies in China have regularly failed to associate the broader cultural meaning attached to drug use.

This study examines the impact of the drug use in China, focusing on opium and its derivatives and adopting a socio-cultural perspective on the issues. Since China is a country which has undergone a huge social transformation and one with a long history of drug use, *Chapter 2* attempts to highlight the cultural significance and recreational use of opium from

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<sup>2</sup> *UNDCP World Drug Report* refers to 'illicit drugs' as drugs that are under international control (and which may or may not have licit medicinal purposes), but which are produced, trafficked and /or consumed unlawfully or illicitly.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Booth, *Opium: A History*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1996, 294.

<sup>4</sup> Zunyou Wu et al., 'Risk factors for initiation of drug use among young males in southwest China', *Addiction*, vol. 91, no. 11, 1996, 1676.

before the Opium War until the time after the Chinese Revolution in 1949. It also explores the factors behind the rapid expansion of drug use and the shift from opium to heroin in the twentieth century.

In *Chapter 3*, I examine the drug problem in contemporary China, the first during the period 1949 to 1978, then the period of economic reform, since when drug usage and drug crime have grown enormously, partly because of access to drugs produced in Southeast Asia. As trafficking and the production of drugs increases, more resources have to be spent on treating drug addicts through health and rehabilitation programs, as well as to finance hospitals and clinics for treating HIV/AIDS. Rising crimes and violence, social instability, lack of economic performance, political violence, official corruption and growing force of international organised crime mean that China has to allocate more public resources to the field of law enforcement.

This short study cannot deal with illicit drug use throughout China as a whole. My main concern is with the border province of Yunnan. There are several reasons to confine the geographical scope of this study to the southwestern province. Since Yunnan is adjacent to the parts of Burma, Thailand and Laos, known as the 'Golden Triangle', a major centre of illicit drug production, the province has been particularly at risk.<sup>5</sup> The ethnic minorities that inhabit the Golden Triangle have fostered the trafficking of drugs across and along the Chinese borders. The Golden Triangle has become a big source of drug problems and drug-related crimes in China, so *Chapter 4* discusses the region in detail.

*Chapter 5* deals with the issue of international drug trafficking. It considers the role of government officials and agencies, including the CIA and the crucial role of international Chinese organised crime and its impact on the Chinese society globally. Is the CIA involved with covert operations in the Golden Triangle region? There is evidence that the CIA has been involved in the trafficking of drugs since the time it supported the formation of the Nationalist Chinese army for an invasion of southwestern China in 1951. When the invasion failed to eventuate, the Nationalist Army turned the Shan States of Burma into a major opium-

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<sup>5</sup> 'Burma' and 'Myanmar' refers to the same country. The name Burma was changed to Myanmar (officially, the Union of Myanmar) and its capital from Rangoon to Yangon in 1989 by the military government. The name 'Myanmar' honours the indigenous 'Mramma' people (also known as the Bamars), who transformed the country into a major power during the ninth century. Myanmar means "the first inhabitants of the world". Although Myanmar has been recognized as the country's official name in international organizations and forums since 1989, some Western countries continue to use Burma to show their disapproval of the military government. To avoid confusion, I will be using the term 'Burma' in this essay. Laos is officially known as Lao People's Democratic Republic.

producing region during the following decades. The CIA also allied itself with the Hmong minority in Laos fighting the Laotian Communists near the border of Northern Vietnam during 1960-1975. Since opium production was a vital part of the hill tribe culture and an important source of revenue for the anti-communist groups, drug lords, government agencies and officials, both for political and personal gains, there is good reason to suspect government involvement, both Asian and American.

Since international drug trafficking brings both political and economic problems for China and foreign neighbours, the drug problem needs to be handled thoroughly. The question of stability largely lies in the relations between China, Southeast Asia, and the United States. Solving the drug problem has to be comprehensive and aimed at all facets of the issue, rather than on specific aspects. This would require an inclusive strategy that emphasises both supply disruption and demand reduction and approaches have to be taken from the social, political, legal and educational angles in China. How the Chinese government tackles drug problem and what are the different approaches and policies by the United States and countries of the Golden Triangle region, will be explored in *Chapter 6*.

To realize the goals mentioned above, I have based my analysis on wide variety of sources. Since no fieldwork has been involved in my study of the nature of drug use, drug trafficking, and drug crime in China, I have tried to make use of all the available materials from the library of the Australian National University and the National Library of Australia in Canberra. These include both historical and contemporary books, magazines, major government newspapers, journals, government reports, official documents, electronic journals, online resources, and surveys. While most of the sources are in English, I have also made extensive use of Chinese and Thai sources. Primary sources have been used to develop a comprehensive view of the current drug situation, both at the national and international levels. Drug-related statistics both historical and current, have been used wherever possible to indicate the extent of the drug problem. At various places in the study, I have incorporated charts and tables for better understanding of opium production and drug-related trends in China and the associated countries of Southeast Asia.



## Chapter 2

# Historical Drug Use in Chinese Culture

When gold and jade are inserted into the nine orifices, corpses do not decay. When salt and brine are absorbed into flesh and marrow, dried meats do not spoil. So when men ingest substances which are able to benefit their bodies and lengthen their days, why should it be strange that (some of these) should confer life perpetual?<sup>6</sup>

- Joseph Needham (*Science and Civilisation in China*)

### 1. Introduction

Any discussion of “drugs” is generally confused because of their modern negative associations. When talking about drugs nowadays, people associate drugs with addiction and what is harmful, unbeneficial and unhealthy. However, drugs are not necessarily substances that are unpleasant, dangerous, evil, leading to drug abuse and crime. Doctors, pharmacist and the public often have different views of drugs. Anything that produces an effect on our body can be categorised as a drug whether ginseng, coffee, traditional herbs, aspirin or heroin. People from cultures around the world long have been taking drugs by drinking, smoking, eating, sniffing, inhaling or injecting. Drugs can be used as medicine, an aid to religious knowledge, or a type of recreation, and addiction may occur in any or all contexts.

Today, China is a country with a large population and drugs come in a wide variety of forms and have an even wider variety of uses. Traditional and herbal medicine exists side by side with Western pharmaceutical drugs. The Chinese authorities attempted to use herbal medicine to counter the recent SARS outbreak. To reduce the complexities of this study, I will limit my study to the use of “illegal drugs”.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of this chapter is to present a

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol.5 part 2 section 33, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974, 284, quoting *Baopuzi* (The Book of the Preservation of Solidarity Master), by Ge Hong (c.283-343).

<sup>7</sup> *UNDCP World Drug Report*, 10. The current population of China is estimated to be around 1.27 billion according to the statistics published by the *World Health Organization 2002*. In this paper the term ‘drug’ will be used to refer to the range of narcotic drugs, as opposed to pharmaceutical or medication. The *World Health Organization* defines ‘drug’ as any substance that when taken into a living organism can cause a change in one’s

detailed picture of China as a society with a long established drug culture, which at times since the early nineteenth century has been encouraged by both Chinese and foreign governments. By doing so, I hope to deepen our understanding of how the cultural tradition of drug use in pre-modern China could have a profound impact on the modern pattern.

China has a long history of drug use, with the view that drugs could play a role in sustaining life appearing very early in its history. Herbal remedies were widely used in ancient China. Like many other people, the people of ancient China used many different herbs, sometimes for reasons that seem odd to the contemporary mind. A plant, for example, was supposed to be effective against the disease of an organ that it resembles, or the name of the plant could resemble the name of a particular disease. The Chinese ginseng root resembles the shape of a man: the two tips of the roots have the shape of human legs and the two upper branches look like human arms.<sup>8</sup> The herb was believed to be the “herb of eternal life”, to give immortality and promote sexual powers, regulate blood pressure and invigorate the central nervous system.

In early times, Chinese scholars withdrew from normal life in order to search for drugs of immortality or deathlessness, both in mineral and plant form. Ancient scholars closely examined anything that could give clues to the drug of immortality, encouraging research in health science and pharmacology as well as more esoteric fields. Although many people died painfully from the substances with which they experimented, there are also records of the euphoria drug users experienced.<sup>9</sup> Many used euphoric drugs publicly, especially the ‘five mineral powder’ or *wushisan*. There was also a belief that artificial gold, not natural gold would bring about longevity. Gold transmuted from base metals, it was thought, would contain the essence of different chemical substances, making it superior to natural gold.<sup>10</sup>

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perception, mood, and cognition behaviour. However, this does not apply to medicinal, non-psychoactive substances but includes tobacco, alcohol, and solvents.

<sup>8</sup> Victor W. Sidel, *Serve the people: observations on medicine in the People's Republic of China*, Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, New York, 1974, 132.

The idea of immortality existed long before the rise of Taoism. References were made to the “land of no death”, “medicine of deathlessness,” and “people who do not die” in the *Shan Hai Jing* (Book of Mountains and Seas). In fact, the author and its age have not been traceable, but it is generally attributed to Da Yu and Bo Yi in the time of Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun (2357-2205 B.C).

<sup>9</sup> Keith McMahon, *The Fall of the God of Money: Opium Smoking in Nineteenth Century China*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., Maryland, 2002, 115. See also Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol.5 part 2 section 33:3c on ‘The Physiological Background; Verification of the Efficacy of Elixir’. Needham says that the symptoms of metallic poisoning include extreme weakness which can later lead to infected boils and ulcers, nausea, fevers, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache, gastric and abdominal pains. There are records of chronic and acute poisoning by arsenic, mercury and lead, with also the harmful effects of prolonged exposure to sulphur, selenium, and antimony for instance.

<sup>10</sup> Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol.5. part 2 section 33, 69. Gold that has been transformed was considered better than natural gold because of long processing and exposure to high temperatures. Gold that is

Plates and bowls made from artificial gold would bring longevity to anyone eating and drinking from them.<sup>11</sup>

The invention of Chinese medicine was commonly attributed to the legendary emperor who introduced agriculture and who had personally tasted hundred types of plants to discover their magical and medicinal values. He was known as Shennong or “the Heavenly Husbandman”, said to have lived around 2700 B.C. He is regarded as the patron saint of Chinese physicians.<sup>12</sup> The book “Pharmacopoeia of the Heavenly Husbandman” or *Shennong bencaojing* was believed to provide indications of medicinal substances and included 365 items of medicine of plant, mineral, and animal origin. The book has been associated with sections on nourishing and prolonging life, restoring the patient’s condition, and combating diseases.<sup>13</sup> During the Spring and Autumn Period (722 B.C to 480 B.C.), shamans who came from the State of Qin in modern Shaanxi province, also tried to find ways to avoid physical death through the ingestion of the elixir of life. Historically, medicine and magic have been closely associated and continue to be so in the belief systems of shamans of North Asian indigenous minorities today.

Examples of the Chinese desire for immortality have been seen through ancient Chinese legendary figures. Some were said to have lived for many hundreds of years. There was a story about Jie-Yu-Lu Tong of the Ch’u state whose diet consisted of only tubular flowers of the Lycians, wax-myrtles and turnips. He was said to be seen at Mount Emei. Peng Zu of the Shang Dynasty was said to live on cassia bark and fungus and lived from the Xia Dynasty to the Shang Dynasty, a total period of eight hundred years. Master Rong Cheng, who was said to <sup>have been</sup> ~~be~~ the teacher of Laozi or an advisor of the Yellow Emperor, was believed to have maintained his longevity through drawing the essence from woman. His grey hair became black and his lost teeth grew back.<sup>14</sup>

It was not until the sixteenth century that Chinese medicine came to a peak. This was when Li Shizhen wrote “The Great Pharmacopoeia” or *Bencao gangmu*, which describes a

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placed in the red sap of a plant was vermilion herb and was something like gold jam. Artificial gold is to be soaked in wine for 100 days.

<sup>11</sup> Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol.5. part 2 section 33, 69.

For further information, see Joseph Needham’s *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol.5 part 2 section 33:3b on ‘Gold and Silver in Ancient China’.

<sup>12</sup> P.Y. Ho and F.P. Lisowski, *Concepts of Chinese Science and Traditional Healing Arts: A Historical Review*, World Scientific, Singapore, 1993, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Michel Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, Stanford University Press, California, 2002, 23.

<sup>14</sup> David C. Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, University Press of America Inc., Maryland, 2001, 12. It has been said that Master Rong Cheng was at least two thousand years old in the sixth century B.C., when Laozi lived.



huge array of plants and substances of animal origin, minerals and metals, together with their medicinal properties and applications.<sup>15</sup>

## **2. Drug Use in Pre-Modern China: A Smoking Society**

The first narcotic drug in general use in China was the opium, readily obtained from the sap of the opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*).<sup>16</sup> There have been many theories about when opium was actually introduced to China. One source suggests that opium came to China as early as the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220). There is a possibility that during the first century B.C. opium was brought by Chinese seafarers who travelled as far as Africa. It has been suggested that opium came to India via Burma, where Chinese had a jade and gemstones trade during the third century B.C., or that it may have been introduced by Buddhist priests from Tibet during the first century A.D.<sup>17</sup>

Another view is that opium was not introduced to China until the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 A.D.), by Arab traders.<sup>18</sup> Opium at this time was a trade good carried on the Silk Road to India and China, though it was never a major item. Jewels, ceramics, and spices were considered far more valuable as cargo on camels. This is plausible because during the Tang Dynasty, China maintained trade ties with Central Asia through the Silk Road. The Chinese name for opium, *a-fu-yong* was also similar to the Arab's name of *af-yum*. It is believed that the Arabs came to China as early as the sixth century and had established communities there by 900 A.D, but eventually shifted their trading patterns to trade with Chinese merchants in Malacca, dealing in silks and silver.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Li Shizhen was known as "The Great Pharmacologist" and was born in Hubei province in 1518. His text comprised of over one million words and describes in detail 1,800 kinds of medicinal plants, 300 of which had never been cited in other works.

<sup>16</sup> Edward R. Slack, *Opium, State, and Society: China's Narco-Economy and the Guomindang, 1924-1937*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 2001, 15. Originally opium was commonly known as *tu*, the Chinese word for earth or dirt. This was because of its physical appearance, its raw form was dark brown in colour and had a hard texture. Opium produced in Yunnan was known as *yuntu*, in Guizhou as *qiantu*, in Sichuan as *chuantu*, and Gansu as *gantū*.

<sup>17</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 103.

<sup>18</sup> Frank Dikotter et al., 'Narcotic Culture: A Social History of Drug Consumption in China', *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 42, 2002, 317.

<sup>19</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 103.

Irrespective of the precise time of the introduction of opium into China, there is little doubt that it has been extensively used there for more than 1,000 years and that its perceived efficacy in promoting well-being and longevity was a major factor behind its popularity.

The effects of opium on the human system depend very much upon its quality and frequency of use, as well as the age, temperament, and habits of the individual. Its first and most common effect is to excite the intellect, stimulate the imagination and heighten feeling. This may lead to unusual vision and brilliancy in conversation and at the same time to a state of dreaminess or subjective well-being. An unconscious person could be in a state of ecstasy. The following is a general sketch of the state of an opium smoker from a mid-nineteenth work:

He would leave his humble station, his honest toil, his comfortable home; he would be great. He runs with ease the path of distinction; he distances rivals; wealth and power wait upon him, the mighty take him by the hand. His dress is costly, his fare sumptuous, his home a palace, and he revels in the pleasures he has read of and believed to be a fiction...And as he advances a step, he reels and staggers wildly, and competitors, guests, minstrels, magnificence, all fade from his vision, and the gray cold reality of dawn breaks upon his heated brain...And when night comes in gloom, he seeks again the sorceress into whose power he has sunk...<sup>20</sup>

Before the seventeenth century, opium use in China had been primarily medicinal where drugs were confined to health concerns, longevity, and religion. The arrival of the Europeans during the seventeenth century brought about the use of tobacco-opium mixtures (madak), which began in the East Indies (probably Java) and is thought to have spread from there to Formosa, Fuk<sup>j</sup>kian and the South China coast. The smoking culture became widespread during the final decades of the late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), and became even more popular during the Qing Dynasty.

Opium was strongly associated with sexual activity during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), as argued by Joseph Needham. In southern China particularly, it was commonly used in brothels. One of its main uses by the late eighteenth century, was as an aphrodisiac, for the drug was believed to stimulate sexual potency, strengthen sperm, and renew vigour.<sup>21</sup> By the

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<sup>20</sup> Allen, Nathan M.D., *The Opium Trade: Sketch of Its History, Extent, Effects, Etc.*, Lowell, Massachusetts, 1853, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Yangwen Zheng, 'The Social Life of Opium in China 1483-1999', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2002, 12. An interesting section about female smokers in China is Chapter 6: 'Opium in the Late Qing Fiction' in *The Fall of the God of Money* by Keith McMahon.



year 1793 in Canton, opium smoking became a recreation on boats that were used for sex.<sup>22</sup> These boats, luxuriously decorated, were known as 'huafang' and became a major industry on the Qinghuai River. The ambience on these riverboats is conveyed by the following:

Lanterns hang at the corners, low beds are set in the middle... decoratively placed, everything is exquisite. There is no curtain on either side so it is easy to look out. When the boats set out at sunset, the two oars move in...the fragrance of snow-white lotus root stirs the heart, songs charm the ear and ravishing women surround you...Everyone had [hair] buns and sprayed temples, wore light make-up. They were dressed in wide sleeves and long skirts. I was asked to pick a prostitute. I chose a very young one, her figure and appearance looked like my wife, but her feet were extremely small and pointed, her name was Xi'er [happy girl]. We let the boat anchor in the middle of the river and had a feast of food and wine for few hours. The gate of a sea town closed at sunset. After dinner, some lay down to smoke opium while others held their prostitutes in their arms to tease.<sup>23</sup>

By the 1830s opium smoking accompanied by sex had become a preferred means of recreation for scholars such as Zhao Guisheng, a scholar official of Sichuan and Huang Yue, Minister of Ceremony and Finance.

It was in the sex industry, with its recreational use of opium, that opium created jobs for women. It was a "unique means of survival", to borrow Zhang Yanwen's phrase. A poor woman had few choices; prostitution could offer a way of earning a living when nothing else was available. If she was unfortunate, this would be her job for life; if lucky, she would be able to find a dependable man to purchase her freedom or grant her status as a concubine. By contributing to the family income, this could be regarded as serving filial piety, which was the most important virtue in traditional Chinese society. In this way, a woman showed gratitude for her parent's love and care.

It was also believed that opium helped to relieve the physical strain of labouring and the mental pain of homesickness. Migrant workers turned to opium smoking as a means of escape from their miserable, oppressed life in China, while migrants and locals alike turned to opium for help to cope with long hours of hard work. It reduced hunger and tiredness. Some found in the hallucinatory experience of smoking opium an escape from psychological pain as

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<sup>22</sup> *Huafang* (boat recreation industry) eventually declined in Canton and became popular in Shanghai instead after 1842-1856, especially the 1853 Taiping Rebellion.

<sup>23</sup> Zheng, *Modern Asian Studies*, 12. See Shen Fu (translation by Leonard Pratt and Chiang Su-hui), *Six Records of a Floating Life* (Fusheng Liuji), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1983.

well.<sup>24</sup> It was commonly used by hardworking people such as guards, rickshaw pullers, waiters and waitresses, and prostitutes. Chinese peasants during the late Qing Dynasty experienced great hardships due to poor administration and starvation. Increased taxation made life intolerable for many, and the upheavals of the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) caused still greater privations.

By the early nineteenth century, opium was used in China in the same way as alcohol was used in the West. It increased sociability when used in moderation. Its use and abuse, however, became much more prevalent after the 1830s when British merchants began importing Indian opium China in large quantities. Foreigners thought that a large number of drug users were coolies, but in fact they were people who occupied all levels of the society, from the imperial court to the beggars in the street. During the 1830s, almost all men under 40 years smoked opium. Even children (mostly boys) were heavily addicted, when drugs were given to them by parents to help stimulate growth and help cure illness. China could not export enough silk and tea to balance its trade. Trade was therefore balanced by the export of Chinese silver. In 1835-1846, China exported 4.5 million Spanish dollars worth of silver.<sup>25</sup> This led to an attempt by the Chinese authorities to control or suppress the opium trade because of the devastation of the Chinese currency.

When the emperor of China attempted to suppress opium smuggling, the Opium War broke out in 1839 between England and China. Basically, the British went to war in order to continue bringing opium into China against the wishes of the Chinese national government and is an excellent example of the European imperialist, racist and colonialist attitudes of the time. The war lasted for two years and led to the British take over of Hong Kong under the terms of the Nanking Treaty.

This treaty changed the entire relationship between China and the Western nations. China was opened up to foreign trade as a result. About 100 foreign businesses were competing with each other along the Chinese seaboard during the mid-1840s.<sup>26</sup> The treaty did

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<sup>24</sup> Kathleen L. Lodwick, *Crusaders Against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917*, The University Press of Kentucky, Kentucky, 1996, 20.

<sup>25</sup> See Carl A. Trocki, *Opium Empire and the Global Political Economy: A Study of the Asian Opium Trade 1750-1950*, Routledge, New York, 1999, 58.

China was going through silver and copper crisis. China's economy had a bi-metallic standard of copper and silver. Silver was worth much more than copper, the exchange rate being around 1,000 copper cash coins for one ounce (tael) of silver.

<sup>26</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 139.

not specifically mention opium, but had the indirect effect of sanctioning the British sale of opium.

Not until 1858 was the opium trade legalised. Approximately 40,000 chests of opium were stored in Hong Kong and 75% of India's opium was traded.

In *Opium: A History*, Martin Booth says:

Opium was also retailed to local Chinese in Hongkong...the *Canton Register* predicted 'Hong Kong will be the resort and rendezvous of all the Chinese smugglers. Opium houses and gambling houses will soon spread; to those haunts will flock all the discontented and bad spirits of the empire.'<sup>27</sup>

*Table 1* shows the general estimate of Chinese opium supply in the year 1879. Before and after the Opium War (1839-1842) and in the 1870s, the export trade in opium from India to China increased significantly, peaking in 1879-1889, when 98,535 chests of opium were sent to China. Small quantities of opium were domestically produced in Jiangxi and Guangdong; in the southwestern provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan much larger quantities of opium were produced, as seen in *Table 1*.<sup>28</sup> Imported opium still represent less than half of the total available opium at that time.

As they stand, the figures indicate that opium production in Sichuan was more than five times higher than that of Yunnan, Sichuan producing 140,000 chests of opium and Yunnan only 27,000 chests.<sup>29</sup> A plausible explanation for this high variation stems from the fact that even though the largest amount of opium was produced in Yunnan, it was later transported to Sichuan. Custom officers stationed in Yunnan and Sichuan stated that the two provinces traded through their ports, even though accurate figures of opium production could not be found in either province. As Kathleen L. Lodwick stated:

There was a considerable amount of interprovince trade in the drug...For example, Yingkou officials reported that native opium was cultivated throughout Manchuria, Tianjin officials reported production

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<sup>27</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 142.

<sup>28</sup> R.K. Newman, 'Opium Smoking in Late Imperial China: A Reconsideration', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 29, no. 4, 1995, 770.

<sup>29</sup> Lodwick, *Crusaders Against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917*, 15. There are no accurate data on the amount of opium produced in Sichuan. This was because since poppy cultivation was illegal during the late nineteenth century and opium was smuggled from one province to another to avoid custom officials. The figure in *Table 1* was the only complete chart that I was able to find. According to Lodwick in *Crusaders Against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917*, Hankou officers stated that 150,000 piculs of opium was produced in Sichuan, while officers in Jiujiang estimated it to be only 40,000 piculs per year, and officers in Shanghai said it was only 10,000 piculs.



in Zhili, and Yantai and Yichang both reported local production. Hankow reported importation from ten of the eighteen provinces, the largest amount arriving from Sichuan, which, with Yunnan was the usual place of origin of most of the opium traded with China.<sup>30</sup>

Table 1: The Chinese Opium Supply in 1879<sup>31</sup>

Foreign Average annual landings in Hong Kong for 1878 and 1879		Chinese Estimates of output by provinces		In piculs (1 picul*=133.3lbs)	
Bengal/Patna	35,585	Anhui	(2000)** 2,660	Guangxi	(3,125) 4,150
Bengal/Benar es	19,397	Zhejiang	10,000	Guangdong	500
Malwa	40,590	Zhili <sup>32</sup>	(3,000) 3,990	Guizhou	15,000
Total:	95,572	Fukian	(1,000) 1,330	Manchuria	2,000
		Henan	(6,000) 8,000	Shanxi	(4,000) 5,330
Persian &Turkish	5,863	Hunan	(1,000) 1,330	Shandong	(1,000) 1,330
Bengal (smuggled)	2,100	Hubei	(2,500) 3,300	Shaanxi	5,000
Less:		Gansu	(5,000) 6,600	Sichuan	140,000
Exports from Hong Kong to non-Chinese destinations:	5,000-	Jiangxi	500	Yunnan	27,000
Total foreign:	<u>98,535</u>	Jiangsu	(2,500) 3,330	Total Chinese Grand Total	<u>241,440</u> <u>339,975</u>
All prepared opium	213,624	All usable ash	209,612	All Substances	423,236

Source: Newman, *Modern Asian Studies*, 770-771

\* ‘Picul’ is a Chinese weight that is slightly less than an Indian chest. Normally, an export weight of a chest of Indian opium was 140 pounds. A chest of Indian opium weighting 140 pounds is said to reduce to the Chinese weight of one picul or 133.3 pounds. This is because opium dries out and loses weight, as it gets older as it reaches the destination. \*\* The figures in brackets indicate variations in data sources

Table 2: Summary of the Chinese Opium Supply in 1879

Opium Supply	Chests	Kg (1 chest= 60kg approx.)
Imported	98,535	5,912,100
Local (all province)	241,440	14,486,400
Total	339,975	20,398,500

Source: Adapted from Table 1, for a concise understanding of the opium situation in 1879.

<sup>30</sup> Lodwick, *Crusaders Against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Newman, *Modern Asian Studies*, 770. The information shown in Table 1, was compiled from estimates and guesswork. Data for 1879 are available because it was a year when custom officers and British consuls around China were required to provide estimates of the native opium production in each province of China. Some of the estimates of the opium in the three southwestern provinces were provided by Colbourne Baber, the British counsul in Chongqing in 1878 and his successor Alexander Hosie in 1882. Their estimates were based on personal observations, interviews conducted with Chinese, and agricultural surveys. Numbers for other Chinese provinces were attained from the Maritime Customs’ officers.

<sup>32</sup> Zhili is present-day Hebei.

Lodwick also noted that opium production in Sichuan eventually declined in the 1890s, as there was a change in patterns of trade. At much the same time, migrants were flocking into southwestern China, which was largely unsettled, hilly and unsuitable for food crops, and opium cultivation intensified. It appears that the geographical relationship of Yunnan with Mainland China has also affected the drug trade in the Golden Triangle. Yunnan was isolated from Central China. As observed by Chiranan Prasertkul, *Yunnan Trade in the Nineteenth Century*:

The Mountains which set Yunnan apart from the rest of China have had the double effect of giving a geographical separation which has fostered independence, and of keeping unchanged many customs which since the revolution have been modified in districts more in contact with the western world. Nor is there amalgamation within Yunnan itself. High mountains and deep rivers break the province into sections isolated from each other, and wherein the customs and vernaculars of the various tribes have been preserved.<sup>33</sup>

Towards the end of the century, opium was a major crop in southern China. It has been estimated that by 1883, Yunnan Province grew twice as much opium as it imported, in response to regional demand. Cross-border trade increased among the local inhabitants. North Yunnan exported opium to Sichuan, Guizhou and Hunan. Opium produced in the southern and western Yunnan went to Burma, the Shan States, Thailand and Laos. The Yunnanese also traded their opium for silver with the Tai minorities in the markets of the Shan States, Northern Siam and Laos. Not only was opium traded but also all kinds of tools, hide, silk, deer antlers, straw hats, and cheap musk oil.<sup>34</sup>

Overseas Chinese became an essential part in the history of opium smoking, especially from around the middle of the nineteenth century. In an effort to forget their loneliness and suffering, many Chinese labourers turned to the smoking of opium during their time off. Others took opium as a relief from heavy labour. In certain circumstances, opium was used as an incentive to emigrate because it was legal in many places outside China. The main places for Chinese emigration outside Southeast Asia were the USA (mostly California), Canada, South America, South Africa and Australia.

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<sup>33</sup> Chiranan Prasertkul, *Yunnan Trade in the Nineteenth Century: Southwest China's Cross Boundaries Functional System*, Institute of Asian Studies Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, 1989, 37.

<sup>34</sup> Prasertkul, *Yunnan Trade in the Nineteenth Century: Southwest China's Cross Boundaries Functional System*, 64.

In Australia, opium smoking was one of the recreational activities common among the male dominated Chinese communities in regional areas. For example, 50,000 Chinese labourers and miners came to Australia in the gold rushes. Many established themselves in the Lower George Street area of Sydney and the Little Bourke Street of Melbourne where opium smoking was common in 1870. In 1890, huge imports came into Australia, with approximately 17,684 pounds of opium entering, and only 400 pounds being devoted to medicinal use.<sup>35</sup> The Chinese in Australia were found to work in groups, instead of interacting with the general population of the gold fields. A census by Reverend William Young of Ballarat of Chinese settlements in regional Victoria in 1867, showed that there were approximately 50 Chinese gambling houses and 80 opium shops in 9 centres across regional Victoria. It was also argued that about 1 in 2 Chinese gambled repeatedly and that at least 4 out of 10 Chinese used opium regularly.<sup>36</sup>

In referring to overseas Chinese, I want to emphasise that in the late nineteenth century, ethnic Chinese, whether born in China or abroad, had commonly been exposed to the smoking culture. Opium consumption was commonplace, familiar, even to the extent of being part of Chinese identity. This was especially true of those with a good income.

### **3. Modern Drug Use and Social Attitudes (1912-1949 & Later)**

Poppies possess as it were a cooling power, therefore the leaves and head when boiled in water bring sleep. The decoction is also drunk to remedy insomnia...They must be crushed when still green, shaped into tablets then dried for storage. If the heads themselves are boiled in water until the liquid is reduced to half then boiled with honey until a syrup forms, they may make a sweetmeat.<sup>37</sup>

-Martin Booth (Opium: *A History*)

Before its prohibition in 1949, opium smoking was a pleasurable activity that could be engaged in by members of all social strata. It was a common social activity that was not limited to either the rich or the poor. On almost every public or private occasion, at feasts, funerals or weddings, smoking rooms were prepared for smoking with beds, pipes, and

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<sup>35</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 59.

<sup>36</sup> 'Fear of the Chinese', *Victorian Cultural Collaboration*, <http://www.sbs.com.au/gold/story.html?storyid=46> [Accessed 20 June, 2003]

<sup>37</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 17.



lamps.<sup>38</sup> Opium houses were also a place where rich merchants or wealth elites joined together for business gatherings or conferences. Ordinary Chinese people enjoyed the smoking of opium with Chinese sweets and melon seeds in places like theatres, teahouses, or opium dens. Even the poorest members of society visited opium houses, but these were furnished with little more than straw mattress and iron couches, where they were sometimes joined by homeless migrants. An opium den was regarded as a place where they could spend a night with bathing facilities and get something to eat.

By the 1930s, opium smoking could also serve as a measure of face, wealth, and status. Both wealth (*fu*) and high social status (*gaogui*) have been important values in the Chinese culture. Guests expected to be entertained with opium and if there was no opium, it was assumed the status of that particular family was not high. Just as wines and liqueurs are served at parties in the West, the quality of the opium provided was regarded as an important measure of the social standing and refinement of the host. Opium and tea were alike in that their qualities allowed people to make a judgement of the host. The colour, flavour, opium preparation, and quality of pipes came into consideration, just like the preparations for a Japanese tea ceremony. Complex preparation could signify how privileged a senior official or a rich merchant was.<sup>39</sup>

If recreation and conspicuous consumption were reasons for the extensive use of opium in China, so too was the lack of medical care. As already discussed, opium had long been used in China for pain relief and to promote health. The absence of medical care was one factor behind the low average life span in China, estimated to be 34 years in 1930.<sup>40</sup> There were only 519 modern hospitals in the entire country in 1929.

Morphine had become popular in China, especially Shanghai, by the end of the nineteenth century, and was cheaper than opium.<sup>41</sup> It was regarded as a cure for opium addiction and due to its foreign origin, (it was first isolated from opium in 1803 by Friederich Serturmer) morphine became a prestige drug that commanded respect.<sup>42</sup> It was not until 1856,

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<sup>38</sup> Slack, *Opium, State and Society: China's Narco-Economy and the Guomindang, 1924-1937*, 41.

<sup>39</sup> One's wealth can also be denoted by the kind of pipe used. For example, a more prosperous family would possess jade or ivory pipes in the living room

<sup>40</sup> Ho and Lisowski, *Concepts of Chinese Science and Traditional Healing Arts: A Historical Review*, 50. For recent information of health care in China, see Xingzhu Liu et al., 'The Chinese experience of hospital price regulation', *Health Policy and Planning*, vol. 15, no.2, 2000, 157-163.

<sup>41</sup> According to the book *Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs*, morphine is a natural narcotic derived from opium and is widely used as a means of pain relief. It is found in various forms such as crystals, pills, powder, or capsules. The proportion of morphine in opium varies according to the soil in which the poppy plant grows.

<sup>42</sup> Zheng, *Modern Asian Studies*, 327.

when the hypodermic syringe was invented, that morphine became valuable for its medicinal use, for example morphine was used as a staple treatment in army field hospitals during the American Civil War. During the Chinese opium suppression campaign, morphine was used widely as both a "cure" and as a narcotic. As described by Martin Booth:

The man who swallows a dozen morphia pills a day has swallowed more physical destruction than the average opium smoker, and he does it without the loss of time involved in the laborious smoking process...many coolies divide their daily quantum into three parts; two are eaten during the day and the third smoked in the leisure of the evening.<sup>43</sup>

Morphine imports to China were not restricted until after 1902, when 195,133 ounces of the drug entered legally. From 1903 on, it was heavily taxed and the traffic went underground. The government then banned its import and refining in 1909. As a result, a pound of morphine which was sold in the London pharmaceutical industry for 12 pounds cost 210 pounds in Shanghai.<sup>44</sup> Not surprisingly, morphine smuggling became popular. It was carried out by the Japanese, who came into China through Formosa, Manchuria, and Hong Kong, French Indo-China and Korea.

Heroin entered China in 1912 and soon became particularly popular in the south of Shanxi and in parts of Hebei; it also reached the northern part of China, Manchuria and from cities along of coast of Tianjin and Shanghai. Heroin was sold not only in pills or powder but also in the shape of a cigarette or a pen. These were known as machine guns. It was said to produce an immediate effect. The drug could be exchanged for materials like jewellery, cloth, pets and furniture. By 1936, it was recorded that the Chinese people preferred to use heroin instead of opium due to its cheapness.<sup>45</sup>

In China during the early 1900s, the production of heroin and morphine was located in the factories and industrial centres of the opium cultivation region. The location of these drug factories and heroin refineries also impacted on drug production, export markets, and processing. For instance, opium were produced in the southwestern area of Kunming in Yunnan, Chengdu and Chongqing of Sichuan province. Refineries in Kunming imported opium from Burma's Shan region. Kunming, in turn, sold back refined morphine to Burma.

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<sup>43</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 163.

<sup>44</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 161.

<sup>45</sup> Julius Merry, 'A Social History of Heroin Addiction', *British Journal of Criminology*, vol. 70, 1975, 307-308.



Heroin and morphine were also produced in other parts of China. Production from the Northeastern region came from Dalian, Shenyang, Jinzhou, and Jilin. In North China, morphine and heroin supplies were located in the refineries of Beijing and Tianjin and in Taiyuan of Shaanxi province. Morphine was produced in the Eastern cities of Shanghai and Hangzhou. In South China, heroin and morphine factories were located in Canton, Guangdong.<sup>46</sup>

During various drug suppression periods, for example 1906-1916, opium cultivation especially in the southwestern part of China, did not completely stop though it appears to have fallen temporarily and caused problems of supply. For instance during 1911-1917, there was a high demand for Burmese opium in Yunnan. There was smuggling from Burma and Thailand. Smuggling became an organized business that involved huge amounts of investment but brought a good profit. An investigation conducted throughout the Chinese provinces between 1925-1926 by the *International Anti-Opium Association*, revealed that opium production had not decreased despite measures initiated by the government. There was not a single province where prohibition was strictly enforced except in Shaanxi and Suiyuan, now assimilated into Inner Mongolia.<sup>47</sup>

It was not until 1935 that Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government (Kuomintang) strictly enforced prohibition. This was largely due to the New Life Movement. A national opium suppression bureau was organized whose regulations involved penalties of life imprisonment or death for pushers. In the report to the League of Nations in 1935, the General Commission for Opium Suppression claimed that the ten provinces of Henan, Hebei, Hubei, Anhui, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong and Shanxi had been established as "entirely free from poppy cultivation". Hunan and Chaha'er became poppy free in 1937.<sup>48</sup>

The use of opium in China did not drop until the Communist Revolution in 1949. China had been a major international supplier of opium, but when an opium eradication

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<sup>46</sup> James H. Turnbull, *Chinese Opium Narcotics: A Threat to the Survival of the West*, Foreign Affairs Publishing, Richmond, 1972, 15.

<sup>47</sup> *Opium Cultivation and Traffic in China: An Investigation in 1925-1926*, The International Anti-Opium Association, Peking, 1926.

Suiyuan is a former province in Northern China. Suiyuan was made a puppet state controlled by Japan and was included in the Mongol Border Land (Mengjian) in 1937. In 1954, the province later became part of Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region after Japan lost the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1945.

<sup>48</sup> Slack, Opium, *State and Society: China's Narco-Economy and the Guomindang, 1924-1937*, 150.

Chaha'er was a former province in Northern China. It was abolished as a province in 1952 and most of it was incorporated in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. The rest was divided between Shanxi and Hebei province

programme was introduced by the Communist government, opium supplies to neighbouring countries sharply declined. It was estimated by the Chinese government that China had twenty million drug users by that time. Opium prohibition eventually became a law in a 1950 proclamation.<sup>49</sup>

#### **4. Conclusion**

As discussed in the first chapter, the use of drugs was not a new phenomenon to China, as opium had long been valued for its medicinal, social, and recreational value. Like a typical cup of tea, opium was associated with pleasure and luxury, as a form of designating social status, used in social rituals or as a spiritual and everyday medicine. Opium poppy has a foreign origin and is said to have reached China for more than 1,000 years ago. It was not until the seventeenth century that tobacco and opium was smoked together, leading to widespread addiction. In fact, can opium and Westerners be blamed for introducing opium to China and addicting the Chinese to it? Can this be justified? Opium was already extensively grown in large scale to meet the market demand, particularly in the southern provinces.

Even though suppression programs were carried out, the practice became entrenched and laws were not put into effect, due to the long established drug custom in China. Opium cultivation did not completely disappear but it continued to be grown extensively in the southwestern regions. The transition of opium into a market commodity, combined with the changing political situation in China later led to the development of drug producing regions in Southeast Asia. How the development of the Golden Triangle filled the gap left by China and how China is strongly affected by drug problems will be discussed in the following chapter.

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<sup>49</sup> McMahon, *The Fall of the God of Money: Opium Smoking in Nineteenth Century China*, 41.

## Chapter 3

# Drugs in Contemporary China

After the governor gave a speech proclaiming the government's resolve to fight drug problems, 4,000 kilograms of heroin and opium were set on fire in sixty immense electrical pots at a corner of the stadium. The flames rose as high as thirty feet in front of the excited spectators, who were applauding and cheering enthusiastically. The atmosphere was highly charged.<sup>50</sup>

-Yongming Zhou (*Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China*)

### **1. Introduction**

After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the Chinese government took initiatives to reconstruct the country. During the earlier period, the country has been largely involved with land reform, civil war and suppressing counter-revolutionaries, putting drug problems behind. Opium suppression programs during the earlier phase were not tightly controlled. During the second half of 1952, drug campaigns became more consistent and were carried out with more severity. There were harsher punishments on a nation-wide scale and more well formulated plans. China in the mid-1950s was largely free of poppy cultivation and opium use and the Communists maintained this reputation for more than three decades, by implementing strict policies. The scale of drug use after 1949, and how it changed after the economic reform in 1978 will be the focus of this chapter.

### **2. Drugs in China during 1949-1978**

What was the drug situation like in China after 1949? Little is known about the scope of the drug problem in China during the period of 1949-1978. Researchers have had to rely on national crime rates for a limited time period and research could only be conducted in the fields of criminal rehabilitation and law enforcement. This has been a serious problem and there is a need of deep understanding of Chinese official statistics in the criminal justice

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<sup>50</sup> Yongming Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., Maryland, 1999, 1.

system, drug-related social issues, policy implementation and policy changes in China. Research has also been complicated by the political struggles within the Communist Party.<sup>51</sup>

Another factor that has made drug-related studies of the period difficult is that reliable crime data has not been publicly available.<sup>52</sup> Sometimes information relating to drug campaigns was concealed from the public and therefore the public had a distorted view of the drug problem. For example, records and data concerning the campaigns of 1952 have been kept secret. The only information available on 1952 has been from a government documentary archive.<sup>53</sup> In 1952, there was no reference made on the drug campaigns through the media, whether it is through magazines, newspapers, radio, posters, cartoons or even public exhibitions.<sup>54</sup>

Variations in reporting of levels of drug-related crime may also stem from underreporting to underestimation throughout China. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Communist government claimed that they had completely eradicated the problems of drugs, prostitution, pornography, concubinage, bride-selling, and slavery by maintaining a tight control of individual life, and isolation from the rest of the world. It argued that such problems only existed in a capitalist or feudal society and consequently was unwilling to admit or discuss publicly the drug problem. Any lingering issues during the 1950s could be dismissed a result of the old system of government and foreign capitalism. It seems that sometimes problems resulting from the effects of drug use within the communities were settled within a day or two by non-professionals. This suggests that the central government had given authority to local groups of citizens to solve disputes quickly and efficiently. The session often ended with written agreements or stipulations. There were no

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<sup>51</sup> Lu Zhou and Mei Cong, 'Criminology in China: Perspectives and Development', in *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, edited by Jianhong Liu et al., Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2001, 158.

<sup>52</sup> It was not until 1987 that the *Chinese Law Yearbook* was first published, which has a section devoted to crime and criminal justice statistics. Criminal statistics come from the Ministry of Public Security and are sent to the State Statistics Bureau. Information is then gathered and selected for the Yearbook publication. Chinese law journal, *Cheng-fa yen- chiu* (Studies on Politics and Law) ceased to appear in mid-1966 due to the Cultural Revolution. For more information see, *Criminal Punishment in Mainland China: A Study of Some Yunnan Province Documents*.

<sup>53</sup> One plausible explanation for this the 1952 secrecy could be the Chinese's attempt to hide drug-related issues from foreigners. Since the Chinese government was accused by the Americans of exporting drugs to Japan in 1951, the Chinese have been very conscious about their image to the world. This explanation seems to be plausible since the Chinese city of Tianjin had been a major drug centre during the time of the Japanese occupation. Most of the drugs in Tianjin originated from the Yuda Company and opium was transported to Hong Kong for the production of heroin. These drugs are later returned for sale in China through the city of Guangzhou.

<sup>54</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 103.



procedures presented, no legal code and no lawyers. This was done to avoid the appearance of major problems.<sup>55</sup>

The first phase of opium suppression program was established between October 1949 and early 1952. The *General Order on Prohibiting Drug* was initiated by the State Council in 1950.<sup>56</sup> It is important to note that the founding of the People's Republic of China had laid the foundation for a new social order. The evidence suggests that, initially the anti-drug campaign was not rigorously implemented or effective. Punishments were not mandatory and could be bought off with fines. For instance, the total number of drug offenders arrested in Nanjing from May 1949 to December 1949 was 472. However, out of this 472, only 26 were sentenced to imprisonment by the court with periods ranging from six-months to two years. In 1950, when 2,090 were arrested, only 345 were sent to prison.<sup>57</sup> By 1956, the number of recorded offences had considerably decreased. However, drugs during the early 1950s cannot have been completely eradicated, for the Chinese authorities simply lacked the means to enforce the prohibition. Reorganisation of the countryside under the commune system, however, will have made opium cultivation much more difficult from the late 1950s. Whereas before 1949, China had been an opium exporter, henceforth it would receive most of its opium from the Golden Triangle. After 1978 this cross-border trade grew enormously.

The various provinces of China subsequently initiated their own rules and regulations in response to the anti-drug initiative. In Yunnan, for instance, an *Opium Suppression Directive* was issued on June 27, 1950 and the *Enforcement Regulations* were initiated by the Southwest Military Control Commission on July 31, 1950. In adjacent provinces like Guizhou too, opium dens were closed and drug addicts were rehabilitated. Those smuggling or trafficking in drugs were arrested. In Guizhou, a total of approximately 3,310 hectares of poppy farms were destroyed. As many as 3,000 opium dens were shut down, 6,333 drug traffickers were arrested and 11,7000 opium addicts were rehabilitated.<sup>58</sup> Out of the 6,333 drug traffickers who were arrested, 4,163 were sentenced to prison, 445 to labour camps and

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<sup>55</sup> Dean G. Rojek, 'Chinese Social Control: From Shaming to Reintegration to Getting Rich Is Glorious', in *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, edited by Jianhong Liu, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2001, 93.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Liu and Yingyi Situ argue in Chapter 3: 'Narcotics Control in China: A Growing Challenge' in *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China* that in 1949 there were over 300,000 drug dealers and over 20 million users. By 1953, 220,000 drug cases had been tried and over 80,000 drug offenders sentenced. The aims of the *General Order* included wiping out cultivation of poppies in areas where the military once operated, prohibiting trafficking and the selling of opium, asking the public to participate in the rehabilitation process and conducting propaganda to mobilise the masses.

<sup>57</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 97.

<sup>58</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 96.

two were sentenced to death. These numbers were not considered favourable since Guizhou had an estimate of three million drug addicts in a total population of 14 million in 1950, and less only twelve thousands drug addicts were processed.

During the second phase of the drug suppression program in late 1952, punishments were highly enforced and well-defined plans and propaganda were put in place. The *Three Antis* (1951) campaign and the *Five Antis* (1952) targeted corrupted officials, many of whom were involved in drug-trafficking and smuggling.<sup>59</sup> Both the *Three Antis* and *Five Antis* aimed to gather information on drug trafficking and make lists of drug offenders. Information obtained by the *Three Antis* and *Five Antis* programs later contributed to the *Directive on Eradication of Drug Epidemics*. Areas with drug cultivation areas were targeted, whether they were large or medium. The focus was on drug warlords.

During 1952, nationally an estimated 369,705 drug traffickers were found and out of this total, 82,056 or 22 percent were arrested, according to the Luo Ruiqing, Minister of Public Security. In these 51,627 were prosecuted, with 34,775 being sent to prison and 2,138 sent to labour camps, 6,843 placed under surveillance and 3,534 released and a further 4,337 left uncategorized.<sup>60</sup> Table 3 shows the number of execution by area on 14 December, 1952. Statistics in the table show that Yunnan had the highest number of executions and arrests, followed by Guangxi and Guizhou, while Changchun has the lowest number of executions and arrests.

**Table 3: Number of Drug-Related Executions versus Arrests in Major Areas in China, 1952**

Areas	Executions	Arrests	Executions as percent of arrests
Yunnan	38	6,239	0.61
Guizhou	25	3,915	0.64
Fujian	27	1,659	1.62
Guangxi	24	4,476	0.54
Tianjin	10	667	1.48
Changchun	3	148	2.03
Nanjing	19	1,153	1.65
Xuchang	4	107	3.74

Source: Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 108. Data on 1952 was obtained from governmental documents, case studies, archival research, participant observation, and a field trip to China of the author in 1992. The author conducted archival research in Kunming, Beijing and Nanjing, as well as participating in the fieldwork in Yunnan and observation in Baoshang City and Dehong Prefecture in 1994-1995.

<sup>59</sup> The *Three Antis* program included anti-corruption, anti-waste, and anti-bureaucracy. The *Five Antis* include anti-bribery, anti-tax evasion, anti-embezzlement of state assets, anti-shoddy work, and anti-pilferage of state information.

<sup>60</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 100.

**Table 4: Drug Offenders in China by Region in 1952**

Areas	Number	Total Percentage
South Central China	38,000	22.8
Northern China	28,000	16.8
Southwestern China	43,000	25.6
Eastern china	23,000	13.8
Northeastern China	23,000	13.8
Northwestern China	12,000	7.2
Total	167,000	100

Source: Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 99.

Table 4 shows the number of drug offenders in China by region. However, it has been argued that the anti-drug campaign of 1952, although carried out in many cities and towns, did not penetrate far into drug prevalent areas of the southwestern provinces, partly because there was no systemic approach and the issue was not regarded as the highest concern during the 1950s. Sometimes the government were too occupied with other tasks for example, with the restoration of the country and building social order after the civil war.

The United Nations has published data on regulations during 1953-1965. For instance, The *Regulations For the Control of Narcotic Drugs* was amended and promulgated on March 27,1954. Under this regulation, narcotic drugs could not be imported without the authorization of the Ministry of Interior. Drugs used for medical purposes were to be purchased directly from the Narcotics Bureau and the Narcotics Bureau was audited from time to time by the Ministry of Interior. This included data on drug manufacturing, trade, and stocks.<sup>61</sup> Other regulations included the *Regulations for the Suppression of Opium and Other Narcotic Drugs during the Period of National Emergency* in 1956. This aimed at wiping out opium use in the country and also punishing drug sellers, manufacturers and transporters. The penalties were death or life imprisonment (which is not less than ten years). Those found to be addicted were to be fined 10,000 *yuan*. Others introduced were the *Administration Rules Made Under the Regulation for The Control of Narcotic Drugs*, promulgated in 1963 and the *Application of Control to Nicodicodine and its salts as a New Drug Prepared from Opium*, which came into force on July 19,1965.

The issue of drug-related crimes was suppressed during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976. Statistics for the post-1966 period generally are not available. In this period,

<sup>61</sup> See ‘China: Regulations for The Control of Narcotics Drugs’, *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, [www.unodc.org/unodc/fr/legal\\_library/index-countries-cn.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/fr/legal_library/index-countries-cn.html) [Accessed 2 May, 2003]



there were few interviews and researchers were not allowed to attend legal education classes or visit Chinese courts or prisons to study criminal trials. In *Criminal Punishment in Mainland China: A Study of Some Yunnan Province Documents*, Hungdah Chiu provides a general glimpse of drug-related crime in China at this time.<sup>62</sup> It includes information on offences which are considered as criminal in China and the type of response made by the Chinese legal system.

One general assertion concerning drug offenders is that more lenient punishments and treatment would be imposed upon offenders who surrendered voluntarily. Among the interesting cases of punishments imposed upon the residents of Yunnan province is that of Ma Shao-Wu. Ma was a 20 years old male of Wei-Shan County in Yunnan, who committed the crime of selling opium. He made big profits when selling ten ounces of opium on May 1973, then in February 1974, pretended to be a government official and illegally purchased 130 ounces of opium on a business trip to Juili County. He attempted to transport it to Wei-Shan County. His failure to cooperate with the authorities resulted in a sentence of fifteen years of imprisonment.<sup>63</sup> Another drug offender, Ma Shu-ying, a female of 29 years old was sentenced to five years of imprisonment, also for pretending to be a state employee to purchase opium. But because she confessed her crime, the punishment was much less severe.<sup>64</sup>

It would be impossible not to mention here the importance of the Golden Triangle and its connection with drug-related crimes in China. Before 1949, China was the main producer of opium in East Asia, with the southwestern provinces supplying a large proportion of the opium consumed in other parts of the country. After the Communist Revolution, poppy cultivation moved across the border to the Shan Plateau and the border areas of Burma, Thailand and Laos. First largely organised by the Kuomintang, the opium trade was later extended by the local warlords, the Burmese military, and the support of the CIA in the global heroin drug trafficking. As already mentioned, the drug suppression campaigns of the early 1950s were not effective everywhere, especially in remote and border areas where minority groups played significant roles. This was certainly so in southwestern China, particularly

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<sup>62</sup> Hungdah Chiu, *Criminal Punishment in Mainland China: A Study of Some Yunnan Province Documents*, School of Law University of Maryland, Maryland, 1977, 1. The author was able to carry his research by gathering data from Chinese documents, including papers on crimes issued by the local revolutionary committees and court judgement and decisions carried by the People's Liberation Army. He also obtained information from foreign visitors and former residents of China.

<sup>63</sup> Chiu, *Criminal Punishment in Mainland China: A Study of Some Yunnan Province Documents*, 24.

<sup>64</sup> For other examples of drug offenders, see *Criminal Punishment in Mainland China: A Study of Some Yunnan Province Documents*.



Yunnan Province. China's relationship with the Golden Triangle will be separately discussed in the *Chapter 4* as it is of great importance.

### **3. Drug after the Economic Reform (1978-present)**

Although the reforms have brought about increased economic growth, a consequence has been widespread rising crime, including drug-related crime. However, I am not suggesting that the increase in drug-related crime in China is a result of the economic modernisation alone, for other factors have to be incorporated. The increase in crime has been caused by the cultural, political and social changes that accompanied the reforms. An increase in drug-related crime was not an inevitable consequence of economic change; nor does its occurrence signify that China is unable to control it.

Rapid modernisations, coupled with widespread political and social disruption, have prompted the Chinese people to direct their energy towards economic gain. People tried to get rich through whatever means were available, resulting in widened income gaps. Before 1979, inequality gaps existed, however, the rich and the poor were not living together. Nearly everyone was equally poor under Mao. However, Deng Xiaoping's popular slogans were: "To get rich is glorious" and "Regardless of its colour as black or white, a good cat is the one that catch the mouse".<sup>65</sup> In the modernisation period, China has been faced with income inequality and rising crime, corruption, drug abuse and prostitution. The Chinese police have not been insulated from the effects of the reform as will be discussed below, there was a rise in police corruption. The causes of increasing drug crime include the long history of opium use in China, the widening gaps in the standard of living and growing income disparities, government inefficiency and weak regulation, and weakening control mechanisms in the Chinese social system.

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<sup>65</sup> According to Ruan Ming, Deng Xiaoping argued that, "It doesn't matter if the cat is yellow or black as long as it catches the mouse." Ruan Ming was present at the time Deng gave his speech at the Seventh Plenum of the Third Communist Youth League on July 1962. It was said that the cat's colour was later changed from yellow to white when the phrase was published. Ruan Ming was a high official who made an analysis of the politics during Deng's period. See Ruan Ming (translated and edited by Nancy Liu, Peter Rand, and Lawrence R. Sullivan), *Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire*, Westview Press, Colorado, 1994. See also, Robert Maxwell, *Deng Xiaoping: Speech & Writings*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1987.

### 3.1 Trends of Drug Dealing & Drug Crime in China

In China, drugs of all sorts are available and new drugs have recently appeared on the black market. Illegal narcotics are being smuggled into China and drug consumption is increasing, threatening Chinese economic development and social stability. According to a recent report in 2002 drugs have spread to 2148 cities in China, an increase of 97 cities over the previous the year.<sup>66</sup> The majority of smuggled drug cases involved opium, heroin, cocaine, and 'ice'.<sup>67</sup> The appearance of 'ice' is not a new incident to China because the country has the world largest natural source of ephedrine, a source of the 'ice' drug.

*The International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2002* argues that there were approximately more than 900,000 drug addicts in China. This was an increase of 200,000 in three years. In 2000, it was stated that around 96,000 drug related cases were brought up, an increase of 61.4% compared with 1999. The 'evidence' in these cases included 22,000 kg of heroin, 12,000 kg of opium, 2000 kg of methamphetamine, 640,000 tablets of ecstasy, 186,000 kg of opium poppy and 408,000 kg of raw materials for manufacturing drugs. Since 1982 more than 70,000 transit drug trafficking cases were handled in Yunnan Province alone and over 80 tons of heroin and opium from the Golden Triangle have been seized by authorities.<sup>68</sup>

The article, 'Yunnan renti fanduo changjue' in *Zhongguo qingnian bao* (China Youth) provides statistics from the Yunnan Border Control Police that indicate the scale of the problems faced in the southwest. In 2002, 254 suspects were caught drug trafficking in the human body.<sup>69</sup> The estimated amount of drug confiscated was approximately 11,3799 grams, this means that an average of 448 grams of drugs were hidden in the body of each individual.

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<sup>66</sup> 'Jintian shi "6.26" Guojijinduri: Yuanlidupin, Guanaiweilai' (Today is 26 June, International Anti-Narcotics Day: Stay Away from Drugs, Care for the Future), *Zhongguo xinwenwang* (China News), 26 June, 2003. Approximately 87.6% of those living in China are heroin addicts. Teenagers account for 74% and unemployed making up to 53%. See also 'Zhongguo zaice renyuan yida baiwan qingshaonian zhanlejuedaduoshu' (China Registered One Million Drug Addicts, with Youth As Majority), *Zhongguo xinwenwang* (China News), 3 May, 2003.

<sup>67</sup> Zhuqing Jiang, 'Drug Problem worsens, upset social stability', *China Daily*, 10 February, 2001.

'Ice' or also known as 'crystal methamphetamine' is a mixed of cocaine and other amphetamines. In Thai, 'ice' is known as 'ya-baa'. It was not until the mid 1980s that heroin trafficking became a serious problem.

<sup>68</sup> *Narcotics Control in China*, Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Beijing, 2000, 13.

<sup>69</sup> This means that drugs are inserted or swallowed into human body parts. Sometimes they are hidden in elaborate hairstyles, at other times, capsules about 4cm long are made by compressing 10-12 gm of heroin in a condom or plastic bag, tied with dental floss, which can later be swallowed.

This amounts to nine times the amount stated by the Chinese Criminal Code as grounds for death or imprisonment for anyone caught for smuggling or selling heroin.<sup>70</sup>

According to a survey conducted in Longchuan County in Yunnan between January 1, 1991 to August 1, 1994, drug use was common throughout the community. However, the majority of drug users were young males living in the countryside along the border of Burma.<sup>71</sup> In 1990, it was reported that there were 6127 reported drug users in Longchuan, of who 5198 were opium users and 929 were heroin users. The number of drug users in this county overall increased rapidly from 3000 in 1982 to 6500 in 1994. The number of heroin users increased from 56 in 1986 to 1855 in 1994.<sup>72</sup> In 1994, 88% of all drug users and 99% of heroin users were males who were between the 20-40 years old age group.<sup>73</sup> Of those surveyed, young males from the Jingpo ethnic group were more likely to use drugs than members of other ethnic groups like the Dai and Han. A major question that arises is whether reduction in domestic production has contributed to greater heroin use in China. Heroin, a refined opiate, is easier to smuggle and transport internationally than opium.

Drug use among young men in Longchuan increased for a number of reasons. One basic factor is the availability of locally produced and refined heroin. Being adjacent to the major illicit growing poppy areas and the centre of heroin refining (Shan State), drug accessibility is not a problem. Other factors leading to drug use were peer pressure, experimentation, drug use by other family members, and personal cigarette smoking behaviour.<sup>74</sup> There is no clear explanation why the Jingpo people had higher number of drug use than other ethnic groups. However, it is possible that religious difference and differences in education levels affected initial drug use.

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<sup>70</sup> 'Yunnan renti fanduo changjue' (Human Problem in Drug Trafficking is widespread in Yunnan), *Zhongguo qingnian bao* (China Youth), 13 September, 2002, 7.

See also 'Beijing Steps up Attack on Drug Trafficking', *People's Daily*, [http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200006/24/eng20000624\\_43843.html](http://fpeng.peopledaily.com.cn/200006/24/eng20000624_43843.html) [Accessed 1 July, 2003]

<sup>71</sup> Wu et al., *Addiction*, 1676. Results of the survey may not be accurate. Since most responses and results were self-reported, data may have been biased or misclassified. Yunnan Province is divided into 15 districts, 2 cities and 127 counties. Of the 127 counties, 40 are located on a border and Longchuan County is one of the counties that borders Burma. It is one of the places with the highest rate of drug use and drug dealing in Southwest China.

<sup>72</sup> Wu, *Addiction*, 1676.

<sup>73</sup> Those selected for the surveys included health workers from the Yunnan Provincial Anti-Epidemic Station, the Dehong District Anti-Epidemic Station, and the Longchuan County Anti-Epidemic Station. Two were from the Dai ethnic groups, two from Jingpo and five from the Han ethnic groups in China.

<sup>74</sup> Wu et al., *Addiction*, 1683. Peer pressure exerts a strong influence especially in an environment where drug were prevalent.



In another survey which looked at both Yunnan and Guangxi between November to December 1996, it was found that heroin was the drug most commonly used by males and females in all age groups. However, one interesting point was that heroin users were more concentrated in Guangxi than Yunnan, as can be seen in the following *Table 5*.<sup>75</sup> Ninety-eight percent of drug users in Guangxi started with heroin, while it was only 85% in Yunnan. The fact that 13% of drug users in Yunnan started with opium, compared with only 1% in Guizhou, is likely to be related to both local availability of opium and local traditions of opium consumption.

**Table 5: Types of initial drug use (%) among institutionalised drug users in China<sup>76</sup>**

Overall		Region		Gender		Onset age	
		Yunnan	Guangxi	Male	Female	< 20 years	>20 years
Sample size	833 (100)	505(61)	328(39)	734(88)	99(12)	417(50)	415(50)
N(%)							
Types:	90	85	98	90	94	91	89
Heroin %							
Opium %	8	13	1	9	5	7	10
Pethidine%	-	0	-	-	0	-	0
Morphine%	-	-	0	-	0	-	0
Cocaine %	-	-	1	-	0	-	0
Marijuana%	-	-	0	1	0	-	1
Other illicit drugs %	1	1	0	0	-	-	0

Source: Li et al., *Addiction* , 578.

#### 4. Explaining Rising Drug Crime

What are the causes of the increase in drug-related crime in China? Aside from the official moralistic explanation in terms of bad attitudes such as growing selfishness and hedonism, drug-related crime can be explained by four main factors: poverty and growing inequality, lack of strong legal enforcement, corruption and lack of internal control. By lack of internal control, I mean that family and education have the capacity to profoundly influence the moral and social values of the individual. The failure or weakening of these institution

<sup>75</sup> Xiaoming Li et al., ‘Illicit drug initiation among institutionalised drug users in China’, *Addiction*, vol. 97, 2002, 578.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Institutionalised’, refers to the social setting where the initial use of drug occurred, whether this is at a friend’s home, home of relatives, in the company of drug users, at hotels and inns, or ‘drug-corners’ (a specific place where drug addicts gather to use or trade drugs), similar to ‘shooting-galleries’. Participants in this survey were 833 drug users (734 males, 99 females) selected randomly from Yunnan and Guangxi provinces.



means that people have not been properly educated for social consciousness and personal responsibility.

Under Communism, the Chinese state systematically tried to destroy 'feudal' traditions and ways of thinking. With the open door policy, the traditions of Chinese culture and thinking have been challenged by Western ideology, practices and values. The value system of the Chinese has been modified and there exists a high level of disengagement following the failure of Communism. Especially, Chinese youth have also been challenged by a combination of growing materialism, school-drop-out rates and unemployment. Limited opportunities for social and workforce participation, and gaining wealth have been major factors in the high rate of drug abuse and rising drug-crime in recent years.

Due to limited regional employment opportunities and improved levels of education, many young villagers began to migrate to the cities to find jobs to cope with this rapid change. Agriculture has become less productive, country and city dwellers alike have had to cope with unequal benefits, economic corruption, and double-digit inflation. A general rise in crime can be traced back to the breakdown of law and social order that began during the Cultural Revolution, as well as corruption since the open-door policy.

#### ***4.1 Poverty & Inequality***

One of the biggest problems facing China, especially rural China is growing income disparities.<sup>77</sup> There can be no doubt that growing economic inequality has contributed to the rise of drug-related crime in China. Drug smuggling and trafficking have been regarded by peasant and workers as an easy and quick way to get money.<sup>78</sup> However, motives for involvement in illegal activities vary. There are those who need money to move their family out of poverty, support aged parents, educate children and siblings, or set up a family business. They are the 'unfortunate' part of the population with no choice, no jobs, no unemployment. Some of them may be illiterate and not even know that the growing or selling

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<sup>77</sup> *China Human Development Report (CHDR)*, The United Nation Development Programme, China, 1999, 54. Growing income inequality is measured by the Gini coefficient. The value numbers range from 0 to 1. 0 is perfect equality and 1 is absolute inequality.

<sup>78</sup> The *Australian Institute of Criminology Occasional Seminar Paper* 1998 states that an example of a top ten drug trafficker involved Ma Yonghua of Yunnan Province. She was noted to possess up to 20 million yuan of drug sales in Gansu Province.

of drugs is illegal.<sup>79</sup> However, there are also those who want to gain more wealth, lively luxuriously, or simply enjoy criminal activities.

The *Human Development Index* (HDI) is one way to measure the level of inequality in China.<sup>80</sup> Since the mid-1980s, regional disparities have been widening, primarily because the richer coastal provinces have benefited from increased trade and foreign investment, leaving the rural interior provinces behind. Provinces that are economically more developed achieved higher human development. The greatest regional disparities occur between the eastern coastal provinces and the western interior province of China. All of the western provinces of China except Xinjiang are poor. Common characteristics of these areas are difficult and unfertile terrain, cold winters, low grain yields, limited resources for subsistence, few sources of income, poor employment opportunities, lack of information, and a low educational level among farming families.<sup>81</sup> While China's GDP maintained an average annual rate of 11.7 percent during the period 1991-1995, for the western and central regions, the average figure was of only 9 percent, while the eastern areas averaged 16 percent growth.<sup>82</sup> The rural-urban gap was 2.4 to 2.1 in 1988 according to the *CHDR*.

Uneven economic development and relative poverty have led to the existence of the 'floating population', groups of people who leave their home to look for work in the cities. Some become 'long-term migrants', while others settled permanently in urban areas. Estimates of the size of the floating population vary. The *China Human Development Report (CHDR)* states that it was approximately 84 million in 1995; census statistics from *Crime and Social Control in China* put the figure slightly higher at around 80 million.<sup>83</sup> Quite a number of these people have become drug addicts as they drift about and become exposed to the drug

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<sup>79</sup> *CHDR*, 92. See *Appendix 1* for Education Index By Province in China. This table shows the inequality in the education component of the *Human Development Index* by province in China.

<sup>80</sup> The *Human Development Index* (HDI) measures the human development status and was developed by the United Nations Development Programme. It measures income, longevity, and educational levels. It has been estimated that there were 80 million people (8.8% of the total rural population) at the end of 1992 who did not have adequate food, shelter and clothing. The *China Human Development Report* says that the poverty line for urban residents was 1,700 *yuan* in 1997, which was three times higher than that for rural areas. See *CHDR* for further information on the HDI of China by Province.

<sup>81</sup> Christopher J. Smith, 'Modernisation and health care in contemporary China', *Health & Place*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1998, 131.

<sup>82</sup> Kwong-Leung Tang, 'Social Development in China: Progress and Problems', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, vol. 29, no. 1, 1999, 98.

In 1990, the central and western regions of China contributed 44.6 percent of GDP, the eastern regions 55.4 percent.

<sup>83</sup> Guoan Ma, 'Population Migration and Crime in Beijing China', in *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, edited by Jianhong Liu et al., Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2001, 66. There have often been variations in data because sometimes the number of migrants were not registered. Peasants and local inhabitants have been able to move to cities and towns due to increasing flexibility of policy from 1984.

culture, though tracing their involvement in it is often difficult.<sup>84</sup> In Kunming for example, work on preventing HIV/AIDS and STDs is targeted at a floating population of an estimated 300,000 people, with the focus on education, medical care and advocacy.<sup>85</sup>

Members of the floating population often are engaged in undesirable jobs such as construction, manufacturing, babysitting, cleaning, manual work on construction sites, recycling, porter, sewing, restaurant work, and assembly-line production.<sup>86</sup> Peasants are often discriminated against and have to take jobs rejected by locals because of bad working conditions, low income and low prestige. Migrants are sometimes offered short-term work, but the employment conditions are not favourable, for example, there are no housing and health care benefits and facilities.<sup>87</sup> Those who do manage to find a better job are not accepted by the mainstream society. Among those who were treated badly are women.<sup>88</sup> Such circumstances, combined with an inability to improve their position may greatly increase the likelihood of the individual turning to drug use and drug trafficking

Poverty persists in rural parts of Yunnan. The province has a gross per capita GDP output which is approximately 60 percent of the national average and 40 percent of the coastal areas. An estimate of 7 million people lived below the poverty line of less than an annual average income of 300 *yuan* per capita, this is 9.7 percent of the total poor people in China in 1994. Seventy five percent of Yunnan's poorest counties are in the minority areas. Seventy-three of the 128 counties in the province are regarded as poor and 51 of these are minority autonomous counties. Those that live in the ethnic minority autonomous region are much poorer than the Han. The value of gross per capita output in these regions is only ten percent of the national average and five percent the average for coastal regions.<sup>89</sup> As observed by Kotaro Matsumoto:

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<sup>84</sup> Liqun Cao and Yisheng Dai, 'Inequality and Crime in China', in *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, edited by Jianhong Liu et al., Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2001, 80.

<sup>85</sup> 'China 1998', *Medecins Sans Frontieres* (MSF), <http://www.msf.org/content/page.cfm?articleid=D56D8564-7332-4F1B-B88D5684DD5DCE8B>

[Accessed 9 August, 2003]

<sup>86</sup> Zhenlai Deng et al., 'Drug Trafficking and Consumption in China: Two case studies', *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 169, 2001, 418.

<sup>87</sup> Ma, *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, 67.

<sup>88</sup> Women have been discriminated in almost every area. They have a difficult time searching for employment since they are often uneducated and unskilled. Women are more vulnerable to drug and drug-related activities partly because they have been treated unequally and are subject to sexual harassment and sexual violence. See *CHDR* on 'Women's Status'.

<sup>89</sup> Kotaro Matsumoto, *Economic Development Among the Hui of Yunnan*, Islamic Area Studies Project/ Tokyo Keizai University, Tokyo, 1998, 2.



About 5,000,000 of Yunnan’s “poor population” of some 6,600,000 are minorities, and around 2,750,000 are regarded as “particularly poor”, whose income is still under 200 yuan a year. The financially self-sufficient rates of the “poor counties” are mostly under 30 percent.<sup>90</sup>

**Table 6: Average Family Member Income in Yunnan (*yuan* per capita)**

Regions	Urban	Rural
1990	1,367	540
1993	2,376	675
1994	3,110	803

Source: John Fitzgerald, *Rethinking China’s Provinces*, Routledge, London, 2002, 193.

As maybe seen from *Table 6*, Yunnan province certainly is poor, there is a big gap between the rural and urban per capita income, and the gap has been increasing (from 40 percent of the urban in 1990 to only 26 percent in 1994). However, we cannot assume that since Yunnan is a very poor region, drug trafficking has been its only option. This is not true. Although there have been limited economic opportunities, the main sources of income have been tourism, mining, sugar, coal, steel, industrial paper and legal cash crops such as rubber, tea and tobacco, as indicated by the Yunnan Statistical Department in *Yunnan sishi nian* (Yunnan’s Forty Years).<sup>91</sup>

But if we look at the history of Yunnan, it is clear that drug cultivation has been a custom there. Opium poppy growing and involvement in drug trade were normal. Drug cultivation and the drug trade persisted because before the liberation there was no energetic government program of control, law enforcement was haphazard, and local peasants in Yunnan often were not aware that the drug trade was illegal and traditionally, opium cultivation has been found to be highly profitable.

#### 4.2 Lack of Strong and Consistent Legal Enforcement

It is a generally accepted assumption that a lack of strict law enforcement has contributed to the high level of drug crime in China, particularly in the southwest. Strong government policy and strict penalties have been difficult to enforce because of geographic isolation, poor communication, ethnic diversity, and responsibility for drug enforcement

<sup>90</sup> Matsumoto, *Economic Development Among the Hui of Yunnan*, 2.  
<sup>91</sup> *Yunnan sishi nian* (Yunnan’s Forty Years), Yunnan sheng tongjiju, Zhongguo tongji chubanshe, (Yunnan Statistical Department, China Statistic Publishing), Beijing, 1989, 105.



programs being divided between central and provincial authorities, often with little coordination. In regard to ethnic diversity, for example, it must be noted that 26 of China's 55 'minority nationalities' live only in Yunnan, while members of many other minority groups also live there. Government policy towards ethnic minorities has changed enormously over time, from assimilation to semi-autonomy which has further complicated the task of coordinating and implementing drug control programs.<sup>92</sup>

In some regions, minority populations have not been under strict government control, and social and political policies have not been strongly implemented throughout the country. In some cases this has been due mainly to geographic remoteness, but in others it has been because of particular minorities being treated differently by that authorities. There has been no single centre where all activities and concerns are uniformly addressed. Nor has drug control been the only casualty of the lack of energetic government programs and investment failure to improve the transport and communication network means that trade and economic development have not been successful either.

In Pingyuan for example, a cautious policy regarding the opium issue has been implemented because of the difficulty in controlling the Hui community.<sup>93</sup> Since almost all members of the Hui community are Muslims, law enforcement has often been difficult due to the fear of possible religious and nationalist separation. Since the penalties were less severe and not uniform, conditions for drug trafficking have been relatively favourable. Hui Muslims living in the Pingyuan area have often been involved in the smuggling of illegal drugs such as heroin and opium, as well as guns, gold, silver, and pornographic products. Widespread availability of firearms has made enforcement of law and order a dangerous business. One argument has been that Pingyuan has been dominated by the Chinese Mafia, including local government officers and managers of mosques, making control difficult.<sup>94</sup> As stated in 'Anti-Drug Campaigns and Ethnic Minorities':

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<sup>92</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 167.

<sup>93</sup> Pingyuan is located approximately 200 kilometres from the Sino-Vietnamese border. It is located between the Wenshan and Yanshan Counties of the Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in southern Yunnan. Many minority groups inhabit the area, including the Han, Zhuang, Miao, Yi and Hui. The Hui comprised of 80 percent of the total 15,000 population.

<sup>94</sup> It has been reported by Matsumoto in *Economic Development among the Hui of Yunnan* that, when police tried to crack down drug problems in Pingyuan between 1988-1991, they themselves were attacked by Chinese Mafia 311 times. The Chinese Mafia were composed of five ring leaders, three of which were cadres of the local government and two were managers of the mosques. They were thought of selling huge amount of opium to different parts of China, with drug smuggling rings in Hong Kong and Burma. They were also thought to be involved in the selling of arms smuggled from Vietnam.

Local residents did not pay taxes, did not apply for residence registration, and resident identification cards, did not register their marriages, did not obey family-planning rules, and did not have their vehicles registered...When the authorities would attempt to enforce the law, local mosques would sound alarm bells to summon hundreds of villagers to surround policemen when they entered the village. On a couple of occasions, policemen were humiliated when they had to surrender their guns before being allowed to leave Pingyuan.<sup>95</sup>

Tensions between the different minorities living in Pingyuan have also undermined strict law enforcement. Strained relations between the Hui and the Han community, and the Hui with other groups such as the Zhuang, Miao, and Yi, have made government officials hesitant to get involved. The Taiwanese media have argued that the drug problem in Pingyuan has been the result of strict drug controls in Burma, which have led to the development of a Chinese drug route.<sup>96</sup> In fact, there is no clear evidence to support this argument and researchers are not sure why the Taiwanese media reported the case in such a way. It may be due to political reasons.

From the above observations, we can see that laws have been enforced differently in different locations. The Chinese government has approached the opium problem in the context of nationality policies and varying treatment of different ethnic groups. It is surprising to note that in provinces with high levels of drug crime like Yunnan, Xinjiang, and Guangdong, punishments for drug offences have been relatively lenient. For example, drug addicts must be imprisoned for five years in Beijing, but in Yunnan or Xinjiang be asked to pay a fine or undergo rehabilitation.

### **4.3 Corruption**

To what extent has reform changed the way the Chinese behave? China's transition to a socialist market economy has weakened people's respect for legal and administrative rules and regulations. Moral commitment to the government ideology, self-control, effective institution and the rule of law have diminished sharply since the late seventies.<sup>97</sup> People's

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<sup>95</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 163. The above quote refers to the Pingyuan community during the early 1980s.

<sup>96</sup> Matsumoto, *Economic Development among the Hui of Yunnan*, 11.

<sup>97</sup> Before the economic reform, Chinese citizens were expected to support the party and Mao's writing. State employees had to be civil and polite, cautious, truthful, disciplined and humble. They were expected to lead a simple life and conform with the rules and morals of society, and had to put the interests of the party, the

social standing before this was determined by their education, power and political conformity. This has not been the case since the reform, with wealth being a higher priority. Since 1978, the Chinese government has faced serious moral and disciplinary problems.<sup>98</sup>

It is generally accepted that the lack of motivation, faith and commitment to government have encouraged corruption, bribery and other forms of official abuse of power in China. Although corruption existed was found before 1949, it was not until the economic reform period that corruption became a serious issue.<sup>99</sup> However, one cannot blame the changing political economy as the sole cause of corruption; corruption was not a by-product of modernisation alone. Rather, economic and political transition created wider opportunities for public officials to seek personal gain through abuse of power.

Why should officials be poor when 'getting rich' became the basic motive of the nation? Public power allowed officials to collude for personal gain. Officials with low incomes and poor living conditions viewed corruption and bribery as an acceptable means of gaining wealth. According to the *People's Daily* on June 21, 2003 a former governor of Yunnan, Li Jiating was convicted of having received over 18.1 million *yuan* (2.2 million US dollars) in bribes from 1994 to July 2000, when he was appointed as a deputy Party secretary of Yunnan provincial committee and vice-governor and governor of Yunnan.<sup>100</sup> Since the law for controlling officials was not strictly enforced, officials could regard illicit behaviour as an easy way of making money, with opportunities arising in administration, housing, pricing policy, enterprise investment, regulatory and fiscal reforms. Low-interests loans from the state-run bank were not infrequently used for personal investments.<sup>101</sup>

Drug-selling networks have become increasingly extensive and well organised, with police corruption a major factor. Most police officers, it seems, believe that they enjoy a certain level of flexibility in enforcement of the law. Chinese police regulations, for example, the *Security Administration and Penalty Act* and the *Police Law* of 1995, allow this flexibility

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country, and the people before anything else. Officials had to live up to high standards of themselves and had to make sure that others did the same. Improper behaviour and corruption were considered inappropriate.

<sup>98</sup> Xiaobo Lu, *Cadres and Corruption: The Organizational Involution of the Chinese Communist Party*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2000, 155. China ranked as the second most corrupt of all nations according to *The Transparency International Survey* of 1995, in 1996 China ranked as the fifth nation, and in 1997 as the eleventh place. The most corrupted sector lies in the criminal justice system.

<sup>99</sup> Even though corruption was widespread before 1949, the Nationalist Party did not do anything about it, which helped the Communist Party gain popular support.

<sup>100</sup> 'Suspended Death Sentence Verdict for Yunnan's Ex-governor Upheld', *People's Daily*, 21 June, 2003. See also, 'China corruption linked to triads', *CNN World*, 10 March, 2002.

<sup>101</sup> Xiaobo Lu, *Cadres and Corruption: The Organizational Involution of the Chinese Communist Party*, 191.



and police officers feel that they do not necessarily have to comply with the criminal court procedures, which were more stringent.<sup>102</sup> An example of a corrupted organization is the Customs Service office of Shamen city. Among those caught for smuggling in 2000 were the vice commissioner of the police department of Fujian province, the vice secretary of the Communist Party's committee of Shamen City, the chief officer of the Shamen City Customs Service office, and more than 100 officials.

Law enforcement agencies also obtain private money through fines. Xiaobo Lu argues that there was an increase of more than 10 percent in fines by the state administration of industry and commerce in 1993, compared to the previous year, amounting to an estimated 800 million *yuan*.<sup>103</sup> Fines as a form of bribery are routinely transferred to private individuals working for the receiving agency. An example of illegal use of fines involves illegal road fees. Checkpoints along roadways are set up and those illegally transporting goods required paying heavy fines to pass through. It was noted in one report, according to Xiaobo Lu, that 6,745 such checkpoints were cleared in 1995. This was half the national total in 1994. Sometimes, road fines were collected, on average at every 3.2 kilometres.<sup>104</sup> Given the large profits made in the illegal drug trade, and the evidence of official corruption involvement in it all around the world, it would be very surprising if corrupt Chinese officials were not strongly implicated in its rapid growth.

#### ***4.4 Lack of Internal Control***

##### *Inadequate Education*

The lack of adequate education in China has resulted in low human development, which has had a negative effect on public attitudes towards the law and drugs, as it has on many other aspects of society. Schooling is the most important means of integrating, controlling and socialising people, yet China's education expenditure as a percentage of GNP has always been much lower than most other developing countries. It was only 2.3 % in 1997,

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<sup>102</sup> Allan Y. Jiao, 'Traditions and Changes of Police Culture: Organization, Operation, and Behaviour of the Chinese Police', in *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, edited by Jianhong Liu, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2001, 170.

<sup>103</sup> This figure may not be accurate due to problems obtaining reliable data.

<sup>104</sup> Lu, *Cadres and Corruption: The Organizational Involution of the Chinese Communist Party*, 213.



compared with a 3.9% average for developing countries and 5.1% for developed countries, in terms of proper education.<sup>105</sup>

One possible factor behind the rise in drug-related crime is the ignorance of the law. People may not understand the law, or may simply be unaware of the illegality of certain kinds of acts. One aim during the reform period has been to restore legal education and institutions as an essential starting point for achieving a society ruled by law and responsive to its requirements. Law schools and law departments were reopened, among them the Southwest Political-Legal Institute in Chongqing. A new Northwest Political-Legal Institute was established in 1979.<sup>106</sup>

While a law enforcement system staffed by officials with proper legal training is essential, it is education about the law and drugs at the school level that is more urgent for the general population. But here there exists the lack of equity in China's educational system. Schools are often under-funded by the government and are dependent on tuition, fees, and profits from school-owned businesses to generate funds. While, there is a group of high achieving students, whose families who can afford the tuition and are educated in high quality school, the needs of the less academic and economically disadvantaged students are largely ignored. The floating migrant population also suffers when sending their children to public schools because of inability to meet formal residence requirements and pay the education fees. Poor counties face the most serious challenges due to their very limited resources.

In much of China, including Yunnan, in-school drug education is seriously neglected. This was true in major areas like Kunming, Mangshi, Ruili, Baoshan, and Longling.<sup>107</sup> While, textbooks on drug issues have been distributed to students in Kunming and Ruili as after-school reading, this had not been done in Longling, Mangshi and Baoshan. This highlights the absence of effective drug education in southwestern China.

There are several reasons why Yunnan has failed to promote drug education and anti-drug programs in schools. One argument has been that too much drug education could lead to

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<sup>105</sup> Xiaohua, Liu, *Overview of Educational Needs & Philanthropic Opportunities in China*, International Community Foundation, California, 2002.

<sup>106</sup> Shao-Chuan Leng, *Criminal Justice in Post-Mao China: Analysis and Documents*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1985, 47.

<sup>107</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 137. Despite the distribution of textbooks on narcotic prevention in 1992 by the National Narcotics Control Commission and the issue of anti-drug textbook in Yunnan in 1993, drug education failed to be effective in Yunnan.

students becoming curious to try drugs. That this could be a sensitive issue for middle school students who have no prior knowledge of drugs was argued by Kunming No.5 Middle School.<sup>108</sup> Another view expressed by education officials was that students are not interested in learning about drugs, that rather middle and high school students are concerned with university entrance exams. After-school handouts on drug issues were regarded as a satisfactory response to the problem. Another line of argument was that drug issues relate mainly to school drop-outs, who once have left school are not seen as the responsibility of the education system. As long as educators conceive their task in this narrow academic manner, it is difficult to see any progress being made in drug education.

### *Family*

There is no doubt that according to traditional Chinese culture, the family was the main institution where proper thinking, morality, personal and social responsibility are taught. The family was where children were taught to be law abiding citizens. Under Confucianism, family was regarded as the core of society.<sup>109</sup> Filial piety was the basic obligation in the family and children are expected to maintain obedience, unity and harmony within the society.

During the revolutionary period (1949-1978) Confucian values and the traditional family were strongly criticised and undermined, yet nothing has been put in their place. Sometimes parents have failed to provide children with sound values and moral education. Parents themselves may not even be aware of the serious consequences of drugs or have information about newly released drugs other than opium. Improper parenting may result in children associating with peers who teach them bad attitudes and ideas, and can lead to delinquency.<sup>110</sup> The lack of education on the part of the parents contributes to the problem. According to *The China Human Development Report* of 1999, there were 145 million illiterates. The illiteracy rate was approximately 70 percent among those 68 years and older, but only about 5 percent for those 21 to 25 years old; however it was 12 percent in urban areas and 26 percent in rural areas.<sup>111</sup> In the poor province of Guizhou, the figures were 21 percent

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<sup>108</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 137.

<sup>109</sup> Ronald J. Troyer et al., *Social Control in the People's Republic of China*, Praeger, New York, 1989, 92.

<sup>110</sup> Troyer et al., *Social Control in the People's Republic of China*, 54.

<sup>111</sup> CHDR, 39.

and 41 percent respectively.<sup>112</sup> We can assume that illiteracy in Yunnan stood at much the same levels, and that therefore it is a serious obstacle to public education on issues such as drugs and the law.

As modernisation has occurred, the Chinese household has become smaller, usually with one child. Inhabitants have become accustomed to sharing public toilets and semiprivate kitchens and there has been the maintenance of close neighbourhood relations. Jobs and chores have been carried out in semi-public area shared by several households.<sup>113</sup> Close interaction between neighbours can help detect deviant behaviour and criminal activities. On the other hand, rapid modernisation may diminish social control within the family if there is less guardianship, such as by grandparents available within the family.<sup>114</sup>

## **5. Consequences of Rising Drug Crime**

Modern drug use and the drug trade have been linked to other social problems. The use of drugs has resulted in dysfunctional family life, emotional and physical stress, low morality, and harm to those closest to the drug taker, whether parents, children, siblings, or spouse. A common situation that occurs is that family members become less well housed, fed, and clothed. The lack of fulfilment of responsibilities within a family can lead to depression, resentment and may cause another family members to become drug-sensitive. As stated by the Public Security Minister Jia Chunwang in the *China Daily* in 2001: "The life of a family is ruined when a family member is a drug addict."<sup>115</sup> Apart from the material and psychological well-being of family members, drugs pose a serious threat to the Chinese society as a whole, particularly in terms of public health, rising official corruption, deteriorating social order, growth in organised crime, low economic productivity and high unemployment.

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<sup>112</sup> CHDR, 42.

There has been differences in educational services in China, with most of the government funding having been concentrated on the coastal areas. For example in Guangdong, the annual per capita spending on education was 1053 *yuan* in 1989, but 397 *yuan* in rural areas. The poorer areas of China also had to be responsible for their own tuition and surcharges despite the aid programmes by governments.

<sup>113</sup> Hong Lu and Terance D. Miethe, 'Community Integration and the Effectiveness of Social Control', in *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, edited by Jianhong Liu, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2001, 108.

<sup>114</sup> Troyer et al., *Social Control in the People's Republic of China*, 17.

<sup>115</sup> Jiang, *China Daily*, 10 February, 2001.



## 5.1 Public Health

Illicit drug use and particularly heroin injection are often associated with serious health consequences.<sup>116</sup> Health problems range from HIV/AIDS to hepatitis, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Contracting HIV/AIDS is regarded as an incurable disease and can be transmitted through sexual relationships and the sharing of needles for injecting heroin. The first case was reported there in 1985 and it was there that the first centre was established by NGOs to promote public awareness of the disease. Hepatitis is another highly infectious disease spread by blood, blood products, injection of drugs and sexual contact. Tuberculosis can be easily contacted when because the immune system has been weakened, so people who are HIV positive also have a high chance of contracting tuberculosis.<sup>117</sup> The hallucinatory effect of drug can also delay decisions about safe sex, leading to STDs. The high rate of drug injection, drug use with commercial sex, sex with multiple partners and the trading of sex for drugs, have resulted in the high occurrence of not only HIV/AIDS but also STDs.

According to the *U.N. Drug Control Program* in 2001, approximately 70-75 percent of all HIV patients in China were drug users most of them men aged 20-29.<sup>118</sup> The largest at risk group were the intravenous drug users, primarily those in southwest China. Such drug users make up 53.3 percent of all the addicts and 40 percent of them share needles, as stated by Dai Zhicheng, deputy director of the Chinese Association of STD & AIDS Prevention and Control, a non-governmental organization.<sup>119</sup> Another study has estimated that 48 percent of heroin addicts in China are infected with AIDS, as a result of using sharing bamboo tips to inject themselves. Zeng Yi, a researcher from the Chinese Academy of Sciences states that by the year 2005, AIDS infection could rise to as much many as 6 million. The United Nations believes that there could be as many as 10 million HIV infections by the year 2010 in China.

Although most drug users are male, there are also many female AIDS cases. Prostitution and homosexuality, as well as drug abuse, have become widespread since the

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<sup>116</sup> It is important to note that opium and heroin has long been associated with the traditional beliefs of promoting longevity and as a natural remedy against general aches and pains in China as noted earlier in *Chapter 1*.

<sup>117</sup> *UNDCP World Drug Report*, 95

<sup>118</sup> Joshua Kurlantzick, 'China's Drug Problem and Looming HIV Epidemic', *World Policy Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2002, 73.

<sup>119</sup> 'AIDS-a battle that must be won', *China Daily*, 30 July, 2003.

Between 1989 and 1994 in Yunnan, HIV infection was confined to intravenous drug users in the southwestern border. It began to spread across the province in 1995. Between 1986 and the end of 1998, a total of 580,036 people were put under surveillance, and 5,604 were found to be HIV positive. Among these people, there were 854 females. They make up 15 percent.



1980s.<sup>120</sup> According to estimates by the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine, Yunnan Province had a 3.5% HIV positive rate for prostitutes tested. It was predicted that the infection rate would reach 5.4 percent in 2003. Sex workers constitute the second largest at risk group for HIV infection after heroin addicts. Women are regularly kidnapped and forced into prostitution, usually in remote areas, where they have no resources of their own. Sometimes, a woman living with her spouse may trade sex to support her partner's drug habit and so be at risk from STDs and HIV/AIDS as mentioned previously.<sup>121</sup>

Throughout southwestern China 'shooting galleries' have been common. A 'shooting gallery' is a drug injecting tea shop where for a fee, a drug user is administered with heroin. It is common for poor drug addicts to share the cost of one injection of heroin and pass it from one person to another.<sup>122</sup> Sometimes, heroin has been mixed with blood. Needles and syringes can be purchased without a prescription, although they are often in short supply. In some 'shooting galleries' heroin is only sold on the condition that it is consumed on the premises, which presumably reduces the risk of police activity. The risk of HIV in such environments remains high because sterilisation of the various injecting items is rarely a consideration. An example of a particularly vulnerable group is the rural seasonal migrant workers of the jade and ruby mining areas of Lashio in the Northern Shan State. Many frequently travel between their homes and these sites of employment.<sup>123</sup> It has been estimated that as many as 500,000 workers, some of the Chinese, visited this area in the mid 1990s.

The number of HIV infections increased during the late 1980s and 1990s partly because of changes in drug trafficking routes. This affected different countries around the Golden Triangle region. Drug traffickers began to use the new route which passes through China, Laos and Vietnam, instead of Thailand. This is one reason why Yunnan has become heavily infected, along with Vietnam. However, HIV has also spread from northern and western Thailand across the border of Burma, particularly in the Shan state.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> It is likely that some female use prostitution to pay for their drugs.

<sup>121</sup> *UNDCP World Drug Report*, 79. See Vincent E. Gil et al., 'Prostitute, prostitution and STD/HIV transmission in Mainland China', *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1996, 1-2. The Chinese Public Security estimates that there are over four to six million prostitutes in China in 2000.

<sup>122</sup> Kurlantzick, *World Policy Journal*, 73.

<sup>123</sup> Gary Reid and Genvieve Costigan, *Revisiting The Hidden Empire: a situation assessment of drug use in Asia in the context of HIV/AIDS*, Centre for Harm Reduction-The Burnet Institute, Australia, 2002.

<sup>124</sup> For further reading on the impact narcotic drugs on the ecology in Northern Thailand, see 'Drug abuse control and the environment in northern Thailand, *UNODC*, issue 2, no. 4, 1992.

There is evidence that HIV and STDs are prevalent among the mobile population of Yunnan. Ruili in the northwest of China, is known for high rates of intravenous drug use, especially since Ruili is a major border crossing-link for Yunnan and the east coast of China with Burma. Baoshan city, Xiaguan and other parts of Dali are important tourist centres with high drug use and with extensive hotels and sexual entertainment services. Hekou is another major centre of drug activities and among Chinese and Vietnamese women working in entertainment centres. Service girls in entertainment venues also exist in Simao and Xishuangbanna. They are especially popular among truck drivers who make occasional stops at bars or karaoke venues.<sup>125</sup> Many of them have contracted HIV through the sex industry in Thailand.

Mobility across border areas has facilitated the rapid spread of HIV infection. *Table 7* illustrates HIV/AIDS situation in China and other countries near the Golden Triangle, according to the *Asian Development Bank* figures for 1999. The Thai -Laos border is one example where working people can cross easily; moving between Mukdahan province of Thailand and Savannakhet province of Lao PDR, on the other side of the Mekong River.<sup>126</sup> A relaxed border control allows citizens of the two countries to move back and forth in small boats outside the surveillance system. The Lao border with China suffers from the same situation, and been an important factor in the increase in Chinese HIV infection. Border passes in Northern Thailand, in the town of Mae Sai, are available for two weeks, without official Burmese visas, permitting travel through Shan State to Mong La and the China border. The China-Burma border areas have been especially vulnerable to drug use, with increasing labour mobility due to work in gem mines in the Kachin State of Burma.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> 'Mobility and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Country Report-Yunnan Province People's Republic of China', *Asian Development Bank*, [http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/HIV\\_AIDS/Mobility/Default.asp](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/HIV_AIDS/Mobility/Default.asp), [Accessed 2 August, 2003]

<sup>126</sup> For further reading on population mobility in Thailand and Lao PDR, see Chris Lyttleton and Amornpip Amarapibal, 'Sister cities and easy passage: HIV, mobility and economies of desire in a Thai/ Lao border zone', *Social Science & Medicine*, vol.54, 2002, 505-518.

<sup>127</sup> See Larry Jagan, 'Burma faces Aids explosion', *BBC News*, 25 September 2001.

Also see Chris Beyrer, 'Shan women and girls and the sex industry in Southeast Asia; political causes and human rights implications', *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 53, no. 4, 2001, 543-550.

Table 7: HIV/AIDS situation for selected countries<sup>128</sup>

	Estimated Number of People with HIV/AIDS	Adult infection rate (%)	HIV Pregnancy (%)	Estimated Adult Death
Laos	1,400	0.05	n.a.	130
Burma	530,000	1.99	3.4	48,000
Thailand	755,000	2.15	1.8	66,000
PRC	600,000	1.18	0.2	260

Source: ‘Mobility and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Introduction Greater Mekong Subregion Overview’, *Asian Development Bank* 2003.

5.2 Social order & Security

There has been some confusion of how illicit drug use can lead to social problems and lawlessness. Family disintegration occurs, leading to the neglect or desertion of children, or to the children themselves leaving home and taking drugs to the street. Children may have parents who are on drugs for temporary relief from troubles, and as a result, they too may begin to use drugs. They may encounter new drugs and other forms of risk-taking behaviour, including alcohol abuse, violence, aggression, unsafe sex, and delinquent behaviour, which are likely to lead to long-term emotional, health and educational problems and an unstable adulthood.

Drug-related crime often involves offences such as violence, robbery, theft, sale of firearms, and prostitution.<sup>129</sup> Sometimes, men, women, and youngsters sell their own property for drugs. Theft and property offences often are committed to support a drug habit. Most of the crimes related to drug use fall on the poor who live in urban areas or cities. They include domestic burglary, molestation, and robbery while walking at night in streets or parks. As their situation deteriorates, drug users may also become involved in criminal organizations and drug distribution networks, committing a variety of serious crimes in connection with

<sup>128</sup> Statistic on HIV/AIDS cases in Lao PDR may not be accurate because the country does not have a complete surveillance system and there is not enough data to show the progress of the infection. The actual numbers may be much higher.

See ‘Mobility and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Mekong Subregion: Introduction Greater Mekong Subregion Overview’, *Asian Development Bank* 2003,

[http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/HIV\\_AIDS/Mobility/Default.asp](http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/HIV_AIDS/Mobility/Default.asp),

[Accessed 2 August, 2003]

<sup>129</sup> *UNDCP World Drug Report*, 97. Resistance by drug traffickers against inspection may have caused increased violence in China. For example, of 150 people in Yuexiu district in Guangzhou city of Guangdong Province who were caught for criminal offences, 60.1% were drug users. This was in 1995. Of the robbers caught along the highways from Guangzhou to Conghua, 80% percent were drug addicts.

illegal adoption, illegal organ transplants, or pornography.<sup>130</sup> Some find such activities as glamorous and exciting as well as financially advantageous.

### **5.3 Unemployment**

Unemployment is one consequence of drug dealing and drug abuse.<sup>131</sup> Frequently, employees who are drug users are laid off. This does not mean that the individual has taken drugs during working hours, but rather the acute or chronic effects of drugs impair work efficiency. As already mentioned, health problems do not only include only HIV/AIDS but also Hepatitis B and C, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as discussed.

Accidents, increased health care cost, and absenteeism are other possible outcomes of drug use.<sup>132</sup> Drug use reduces productivity and performance. Drug users may have consume twice the medical benefits consumed by others. Working with addicts may cause stress and unease amongst other workers. There is also the possibility that a drug-using employee may steal or embezzle the company's funds or property.

## **6. Conclusion**

As China progressed through the reform period, the existence of official corruption within the state bureaucracies, weak security system, and widening income disparities have strongly promoted the accumulation of wealth. This eventually leads to a desire for a better life, the need for more money, and the motivation of 'getting rich', as was illustrated earlier in *Chapter 3*. Not only was the desire for wealth that promoted drug crimes, but also the willingness to take risks. Some Chinese, especially the poor, could not cope with the changing economic situation. The introduction of luxurious products and western technologies have widened income disparities. The emergence of private business have interrupted the traditional life style, changing life and employment chances, both in the rural and urban areas.

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<sup>130</sup> *UNDCP World Drug Report*, 84.

<sup>131</sup> According to *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, in 1995 71.5% of the 611 drug users were unemployed in Yuexiu district, Guangzhou.

<sup>132</sup> *UNDCP World Drug Report*, 101.



The number of drug addicts in 2002 was more than 90,000, according to the *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, whether this is the addiction of opium, heroin, 'ice', or methamphetamine.

The nature and impact of drug problems are considerable, and have resulted in serious health, social, economic, and political consequences. New types of diseases have multiplied from the sharing of needles and blood transfusion, leading to AID/HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, and hepatitis. Unemployment is common among drug users, where many are laid off. Since many could not cope with the gap between income and costs, they entered theft or prostitution to support their drug habit.

Since drug crime is one of the easiest ways to earn money, many viewed it as an opportunity. Drugs found in Yunnan are transported from the Golden Triangle, the major poppy production area in Southeast Asia. Within the Golden Triangle, the Shan State of Burma produced the most opium. Opium and heroin were traditionally produced in the Golden Triangle, transported to Thailand and Burma and exported to the international market. But since the 1980s, drug organizations have opened up new ways to Yunnan, turning China into a large market for illegal drugs. Since Yunnan is characterised by high mountain ranges, deep valleys, thick forests and jungles, cross-border trade and drug smuggling have been easy to conduct. Drug trafficking spread rapidly due to geographical conditions and relations of ethnic minorities along the Sino-Burmese border. They will be fully discussed in the chapter that follows.

## Chapter 4

# The Golden Triangle and China's Drug Problem (Past and Present)

Some hill tribes, such as the Yao, stagger the planting of poppy seeds so that the flowers in a field would mature over a longer period of time. Others, like the Hmong, try to plant an entire field at the same time, thus creating a tightly compacted harvest period. They claim that, although the work load is intense, it is easier to simply move through the field tapping all the plants rather than having to select only the mature ones in several sweeps of the field.<sup>133</sup>

-Edward F. Anderson (*Plants and People of the Golden Triangle*)

### 1. Introduction

Large amounts of opium and heroin began to enter China after 1978, the main source being the Golden Triangle. During period the 1949-1978, the Communist government succeeded in suppressing both opium production and consumption. The economic reforms of the late 1970s make it easier for a domestic market for drugs to re-establish itself, while, in the absence of local production of opium and heroin, the Golden Triangle increased production to meet the new demand.

The mountainous remote areas of Burma, located opposite the northern Thai provinces of Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Mae-Hongsorn and Tak have always been vulnerable to drug smuggling, as argued by *Samnagngan Khanna Kammakarn Phongkhan Lae Phrabphram Ya Sep-Thid* (Office of the Narcotic Control Board in Thailand) in 2002.<sup>134</sup> Massive amounts of heroin and opium were smuggled across the Burmese border into Yunnan and later distributed to other parts of China, including Shanghai, Gansu, Shaanxi, Sichuan, and Guangxi. The Yunnan drug trade route has developed in the last few decades, linking the Golden Triangle to

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<sup>133</sup> Edward F. Anderson, *Plants and People of The Golden Triangle: Ethnobotany of the Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand*, Silkworm Books, Chiangmai, 1993, 119-120.

<sup>134</sup> For further reading on the current drug situation in Thailand, see 'Satthanakarn Ya Sep-Thid: Heroin Jakk Samliem-thongkamm Pharn Prathet Thai' (Drug Situation: Heroin From the Golden Triangle Through Thailand), *Samnagngan Khanna Kammakarn Phongkhan Lae Phrabphram Ya Sep-Thid* (Office of the Narcotic Control Board in Thailand), <http://www.oncb.go.th/document/situation02112603.htm> [Accessed 14 July, 2003]

Hong Kong via Yunnan Province. Drugs are being transported from the Golden Triangle to Guangzhou and Hong Kong by air or truck. As more and more Heroin No.4 refineries are being established close to the Chinese border, it is no longer necessary to transport raw opium along the Thai-Burmese border in the south.<sup>135</sup> Traffickers can transport heroin easily from the northern Shan States across southern China and into Hong Kong.<sup>136</sup>

This new trafficking route stems from the increased prohibition and strong law enforcement against opium cultivation in Thailand as well as the changing situation in China. From the 1960s to the end of the 1980s, Thailand was a principle route for drug trafficking and heroin exportation. But an opium eradication program has been efficient in Thailand, with opium production decreasing from 250,000 kilograms in the mid-1960s to less than 4,000 kilograms in the year 2000. Areas that still maintained opium poppy farms include the 11 northern provinces and one northeastern province of Thailand, but opium production is gradually being replaced through crop substitution programs and the royal projects. The royal projects have been initiated by King Bhumibol Adulyadej and members of the royal family in Thailand. They aim to improve the living conditions of all the Thai people. The royal projects concerning opium substitution programs will be discussed further in *Chapter 6*. Since opium poppies have caused problems for the government, the objective has been to educate tribal people in growing alternate crops, while allowing them to earn small incomes through farming. However, while opium has been significantly reduced during the last 30 years in Thailand, there has been an increase in the use of amphetamines in the country.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Heroin No.4 is heroin of a purer quality. It goes through four processing stage where hydrochloric acid and ether are added to heroin base or heroin no.3. It is soluble in water, injectable and sold as white powder in the market, but the price varies according the colour.

<sup>136</sup> Bertil Lintner, *Cross-border Drug Trade in the Golden Triangle (S.E. Asia)*, Boundaries Research Press on behalf of the International Boundaries Research Unit, U.K., 1991, 2.

<sup>137</sup> Desmond Ball, *Burma and Drugs: The Regime's Complicity in the Global Drug Trade: Working Paper No. 336*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1999, 2.

According to the statistics by *Samnagang Khanna Kammakarn Phongkhan Lae Phrabphram Ya Sep-Thid* (Office of the Narcotic Control Board in Thailand) there were approximately 75, 071 cases of amphetamines where 66.3 million tablets were caught in during the month of January-September, 2002. This was equivalent to 5, 969 kilograms of amphetamines.

See also Kirsten Melbye et al., 'Lifetime correlates associated with amphetamine use among northern Thai men attending STD and HIV anonymous test sites', *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, vol. 68, no. 3, 2002, 245-253.

## 2. Locating the 'Golden Triangle'

The term 'Golden Triangle' refers to the area where the borders of Burma, Laos and Thailand meet and the Sop Ruak tributary flows into the Mekong River.<sup>138</sup> The area contains approximately 3.7 million people and is about 92,000 square miles in area, though no one knows exactly how large because of its undefined borders. Some reports estimate its area to be as big as 97,000 square miles.<sup>139</sup> The Golden Triangle is the world's largest source of illegal narcotics, including opium, morphine, and heroin. It is the home of drug warlords, arms dealers, rebel armies and bandits, as well as numerous ethnic minorities. According to Alan Dupont, *Drugs, Transitional Crime and Security in East Asia*, the Golden Triangle is responsible for 65% of the world's illicit opium production, with a value of at least US\$ 160 billion annually.<sup>140</sup>

According to the *Jiefang jun bao* (The Chinese Liberation Army Newspaper), for 150 years and many generations, the Golden Triangle has been involved in opium cultivation. This is because opium was easy and cheap to grow and profits were ten times higher than growing grain.<sup>141</sup> Of course this was also true of much of southwest China, especially Yunnan. Approximately one-third of the arable land in Yunnan Province was devoted to opium cultivation by 1875 and by the end of the century opium became an important cash crop in Guangxi, Yunnan, Sichuan as well as the coastal province of Zhejiang and Fujian and other parts of China located near Burma and Laos. Opium cultivation became a cash crop in Thailand in the late nineteenth century, due to the arrival of minority groups such as the Hmong and the Yao who were escaping the disorders in China. As they migrated, the minorities brought with them seeds and knowledge of how to grow the poppy.

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<sup>138</sup>Peter Chalk, 'Southeast Asia and the Golden Triangle's Heroin Trade: Threat and Response', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol.23, 2000, 89. Chalk refers to the Golden Triangle as the "breadbasket" of the world's heroin trade. I would like to further explain that the rivers that flow into the Mekong River are the Kok, the Sai, the Ruak and the Ing. The Sai and the Ruak have their sources in Burma and form the Thai-Burma border in Chiang Rai, a northern province in Thailand. The point where the Ruak River joins the Mekong is known as Sop Ruak.

<sup>139</sup> Bo Yang (translated by Clive Gulliver), *Golden Triangle: Frontier and Wilderness*, Joint Publishing Co., Hong Kong, 1987, 2.

<sup>140</sup> Alan Dupont, *Drugs, Transnational Crime and Security in East Asia*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1998, 8.

<sup>141</sup> 'Yunnan jingdu: zhimian jingsanjiao' (Prohibited Drugs in Yunnan Targeting in the Golden Triangle), *Jiefang jun bao* (The Chinese Liberation Army), 25 February, 2002, 10.

It has been estimated that approximately 89 percent of opium comes from Burma, 9 percent from Laos and 2 percent from Thailand.



The Golden Triangle was originally a region of 'slash-and-burn' or swidden cultivation. In this form of shifting agriculture, trees and underbrush are cut down and burned before planting is begun, destroying insect pests and disease while leaving layers of ash which serve as fertilizer. Many minority people were involved in dry rice farming, and also planted maize for both human and animal consumption, and varieties of vegetables including cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, onions, beans, and melons. These crops are planted along the maize, rice and opium poppy plants. It has been claimed that opium planted with vegetables is the most delicious.<sup>142</sup>

Poppies in the Golden Triangle cannot be grown at an altitude below 850 meters; it is believed that an elevation of 950-1000 meters is where the best poppies are grown. Therefore, growing poppy plants has been restricted to the upland areas of Burma, Thailand and Laos. In Burma, this means the eastern mountain range that runs from the north to the south through the Kachin, Kokang, Wa and Shan States. In Thailand, opium is mostly grown in the Northern and Western Central Highland area, including the provinces of Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Chiang Rai, Nan and Tak.<sup>143</sup> The opium-producing region of Laos lies in the Northwestern hill regions of Luang Prabang, Xieng Khouang, Pong Saly, and Southern Houa Phan.<sup>144</sup> In fact, most of the refining of opium occurs in the laboratories located in the Shan region of eastern Burma, bordering China, Laos and Thailand. Essential chemicals involved in the refining process such as acetic anhydride, thionyl chloride, ethylidine diacetate are obtained from either China or India, often imported as substances necessary for perfume or industrial dye manufacturing.<sup>145</sup> *Table 8* shows the estimated amount of opium produced in the Golden Triangle in selected years 1969-1979 and *Table 9* for the period 1987-1997.

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<sup>142</sup> Paul and Elaine Lewis, *People of the Golden Triangle: Six Tribes in Thailand*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1984, 16.

<sup>143</sup> Stephen Francis Worobec, *International Narcotics Control in the Golden Triangle of Southeast Asia*, University Microfilms International, Michigan, 1984, 14.

<sup>144</sup> Southern Houa Phan was formerly known as Sam Neua

<sup>145</sup> See Chalk, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 92.

**Table 8: Opium Production in the Golden Triangle in selected years (1969-1979)**

Country/Year	Area cultivated (hectares)	Opium harvest (tonnes)
Burma 1969	24,800	183
Thailand 1979	42,000-135,000	14-45
Laos 1970	20,000-60,000	45-160
Total (max.) 388 tonnes		

Source: James H. Turbull, *Chinese Opium Narcotics: A Threat to the Survival of the West*, 23.

**Table 9: Estimated Potential Opium Production in the Golden Triangle, 1987-1997 (tonnes)**

Country	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Burma	835	1,280	2,430	2,255	2,350	2,280	2,575	2,030	2,340	2,560	2,365
China	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	19
Laos	225	255	380	275	265	230	180	85	180	200	210
Thailand	24	25	50	40	34	24	42	17	25	30	25

Source: Dupont, *Drugs, Transnational Crime and Security in East Asia*, 8.

To put the figures in context, during the late 1960s Burma produced an estimated 183 tonnes of opium annually, indicating its role as a minor producer of opium. Over the next twenty years, during the 1980s, opium production expanded dramatically, signifying that the Burmese government was unable to control illicit opium growth due to weak administrative systems in the Kachin and Shan States, particularly near the ill-defined border with Yunnan. There was an increase of over 290% in two years from 1987 to 1989, but since the early 1990s, the figures have become more or less stabilised. Opium production in Thailand has progressively decreased from 1979 to 1987, by almost 53%. Since indigenous cultivation of opium in Thailand has been brought under strict control, opium production has been limited, as expressed in terms of tonnes produced annually. The main problem that concerns Thailand is perhaps the city of Bangkok, which became an international transit point for drugs. Laos on the other hand, has experienced similar drug growth to Burma. Production rose substantially increasingly from 1970 to the late 1980s, but remained stable thereafter.

Until 1949, the southwestern region of China remained a principle producer of opium. Opium production was gradually eliminated when the Communists came into power. Growing political discontent within China, the drive against drug addicts, laws prohibiting imports of narcotics and domestic drug trafficking within China, have all resulted in an

increased production in the Golden Triangle. After 1979, China became a market for opium and heroin; high-grade heroin began to appear throughout major Chinese cities, which act as centres for international drug markets and global narcotics trade. Chinese criminal groups have become more internationalised, established their own operations independently or work in conjunction with foreign criminal organizations, largely confined within the Golden Triangle. The Golden Triangle has filled the gap left by the decline of domestic production of opium in China and supplemented it by becoming the biggest producer of heroin in recent years.

There are two main heroin routes from the Golden Triangle through China. The first route starts from Kokang and Mong Ko regions of the northeastern Shan State. It goes through the Chinese cities of Ruili, Wanding and Mangshi to Kunming. The second route is a southern route that starts from the refineries in Northern Kengtung, near the Laos border, then passes through the area of Jinghong in Xishuangbanna and on to Kunming.<sup>146</sup> In general, most of the drugs are now smuggled from northern Burma through Yunnan into Southern China for transshipment through Hong Kong. Hong Kong is also a source of criminal activities in Africa, Europe and America. The issue of Asian criminal organization and their links with markets in North America and Europe will be fully discussed later in *Chapter 5*.

## ***2.1 Geography of Southwestern China***

Before 1949, the southwestern provinces of China were largely isolated from rest of the Mainland by mountain ranges and largely unnavigable rivers.<sup>147</sup> In assessing the situation of the southwestern provinces, especially Yunnan, one has to consider their topography. The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is characterised by mountain peaks and ridges that are cut by deep valleys. They run into western Sichuan and northwestern Yunnan. The Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau is rugged and elevated.<sup>148</sup> Only 4 percent of land in Yunnan was suitable for cultivation in 1946. The Sichuan or Red Basin lies to the east of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau and north of the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau and contains the Chengdu Plain. Except for this Plain, the whole area is mountainous, with steep escarpments that hinder communication and

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<sup>146</sup> Lintner, *Cross-border Drug Trade in the Golden Triangle (S.E. Asia)*, 26.

<sup>147</sup> The three major provinces of southwestern China include Yunnan, Sichuan and Guizhou.

<sup>148</sup> Dorothy J. Solinger, *Regional Government and Political Integration in Southwest China, 1949-1954: A Case Study*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977, 47.

transportation.<sup>149</sup> Due to this rugged terrain, communication has been heavily dependent on the navigable sections of Yangtze River and its tributaries.

This geographic isolation was attractive to members of the KMT after their defeat in 1949. The KMT viewed the location as a safe haven for their own regime and settlement. Many of those who had escaped to Burma after defeat also made their way back to Yunnan. According to the case studies by Dorothy J. Solinger, more than a million ex-KMT supporters were left in the southwestern region. Among them were approximately 900,000 turncoat troops, prisoners of wars, surrendered soldiers, ~~an estimated~~<sup>about</sup> of 400,000 government employees and teachers, and 100,000 state operated enterprise employees. It has been argued that there were also possibly other groups, including members of secret societies and spies. Spies, possibly as many as 80,000, were left behind by the KMT so they could maintain contact with local authorities. Some disguised themselves by working within schools, mass organizations, trade workshops, factories, mines and government organizations.<sup>150</sup>

The number of former KMT soldiers that crossed the international frontier from southern Yunnan increased from about 1,700 in early 1950 to 4,000 by April 1951. The Nationalist Army reconstructed an airport in Mengsa in the southern Shan State not only to get arms and logistic supplies from the American military planes but also as a location to export opium outside the Golden Triangle. By 1953, the number of former KMT soldiers in the Shan States was as high as 12,000.<sup>151</sup> Production in the Shan States greatly increased and an opium tax was imposed on hill farmers and caravans crossing their area. This practice allowed the KMT to finance the occupying troops and militias in Yunnan. Opium was popular as a source of profit and revenue to maintain their newly established rule in the southwest.

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<sup>149</sup> Solinger, *Regional Government and Political Integration in Southwest China, 1949-1954: A Case Study*, 49. Transportation of goods has been difficult, slow and inefficient. Often goods were carried by man or animal carts or transported by pushing carts along narrow stone trails. However, even these were limited.

<sup>150</sup> Solinger, *Regional Government and Political Integration in Southwest China, 1949-1954: A Case Study*, 83.

<sup>151</sup> Nicholas Tapp, *The Hmong of Thailand: Opium People of the Golden Triangle*, Anti-Slavery Society, U.K., 1986, 26.



## 2.2 Border Trade in Southwestern China

China's open door policy unofficially opened the gates along its international borders.<sup>152</sup> The border provinces are treated differently from the interior provinces because they are seen as important for trade development and as a market for border countries. Economic and social interactions in border regions have been helped by the fact that members of the same indigenous minorities live across the borders, and in turn has reinforced the ethnic identity of those groups.<sup>153</sup> It was observed by Mevlyn Levitsky, US Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotic Matters during his visit to China in 1991, that local and hill tribe inhabitants could travel back and forth in trucks loaded with raw materials such as logs, rice and fish, and were not seriously inspected by Chinese officials. On the Burmese border bridge, there was a young Burmese boy, around the age of 10, performing the duty of a guard.<sup>154</sup> There were no strict border controls or policies.

Initially, after the People's Republic of China was founded, border trade was only carried out on a small scale by farmers on both sides of the borders. This reflected the State Council's 'Border Trade Policy.' Restrictions were enforced where Chinese farmers were allowed to buy only 30 *renminbi* worth of border goods. In this way, farmers and local inhabitants of the border regions were able to cope with the lack of everyday goods and materials.<sup>155</sup> Border trade during the years 1949-1978 was confined to a 10-kilometre band along the border. However, these restrictions were not strictly enforced due to corrupt officials, ineffective border patrols, lack of political will, bribery and smuggling.<sup>156</sup>

Border trade between Yunnan and the neighbouring countries increased dramatically during the early 1980s. There was migration from Yunnan to other parts of China as well as to Laos, Vietnam, Burma, and through Burma, Thailand. Sino-Burmese border trade has been

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<sup>152</sup>The border trade of southwestern China increased from US \$650 million in 1989 to US\$1.14 billion in 1991. This is an increase of approximately 75 percent. However, I would like to point that there were variations in the progress of border trades. This was due to the disparities in transportation, development of infrastructure facilities, and environmental differences. Wanding located in southwestern Yunnan is an important border town that has contact with much of Southeast Asia. A major border trade market known as the 'The Golden Triangle Wholesale Market' held up to of 2,000 stalls in 1993.

<sup>153</sup> Some of the hill tribes that inhabit the Golden Triangle are not indigenous to the region, some have migrated from the southern China region during the nineteenth century. They brought with them the custom of growing opium.

<sup>154</sup> *Joint Hearing Before the Committee on the Judiciary and the Caucus on International Narcotics Control of the United States Senate*, US Government Printing Office, Washington, 1993, 25.

<sup>155</sup> Grant Evans et al., *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social & Cultural Change in the Border Regions*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2000, 73.

<sup>156</sup> Evans et al., *Where China Meets Southeast Asia: Social & Cultural Change in the Border Regions*, 74.

particularly productive as a result of the economic reforms, as China and Burma have become dependent on one another. Large amounts of commodities from Southeast Asia entered Yunnan and Chinese goods such as machinery and electronic products, textiles, and medicine have entered the Southeast Asian market via the southern borders of Yunnan.<sup>157</sup> In early 1993 for example, Burma gained \$0.5 million in the motor vehicle transit trade by allowing cars to transit from Thailand to China.<sup>158</sup> Yunnan on the other hand, imports wood, food, jade and aquatic products from Burma and more than eighty percent of the trade goes through Dehong Prefecture.

Most of the policies initiated during the 1980s aimed to provide traders and investors with guidelines for trade and business management. To further illustrate the Chinese open border policy, 27 border districts were allowed to establish trade ties in 1984. Local and overseas traders could freely engage in trade and border passes and business quotas were waived. The Southwestern Cooperation Zone was initiated in 1984, consisting of the provincial-level administration of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Chengdu, and later was extended to include Tibet and Chongqing. The aim was to initiate cooperation in terms of resources, technology, capital, technical and management enterprises, business, transport and energy resources.<sup>159</sup> In Yunnan, subsequently 94 open cities and counties became involved, making up 74 percent of the province's total area. Seven state-level and ten provincial-level ports and 92 outlets have been established in Yunnan since 1992. The trading ports of Ruili and Wanding on the China-Burma border, Mengla on the China-Laos border, and Hekou on the China-Vietnam border are the most significant ports.

A good example of how economic development and cross-border trade have gone hand in hand in Yunnan since the late 1970s is Xishuangbanna [Sipsongpanna] Prefecture, a region isolated even from the rest of Yunnan. Border trade in Xishuangbanna has been dependent on demand and supply from other parts of China, particularly the major Chinese economic cities.<sup>160</sup> The prefecture's connection to external markets has been maintained and developed by growing number of traders, most of them Han Chinese or minorities of the prefecture. Since the economic reforms, approximately fifty free trade commodity markets

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<sup>157</sup> See Wang Shilu, 'Yunnan yu dongnanya jingji guanxi yanjiu' (Study of the Economic Relations Between Yunnan and Southeast Asia), *Yunnan shehui kexue* (Social Sciences in Yunnan), no. 4, August 1992, 21-23.

<sup>158</sup> David S.G. Goodman and Gerald Segal, *China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade, and Regionalism*, Routledge, London, 1994, 306.

<sup>159</sup> Goodman, *China Deconstructs: Politics, Trade, and Regionalism*, 295.

<sup>160</sup> For further information on the recent economic change in Xishuangbanna, see Irene Eng, 'Historical Contingency and Commercialisation in Xishuangbanna', *Royal Dutch Geographical Society*, vol. 89, no. 4, 1998, 446-458.

have been established in Xishuangbanna. The main exports from Xishuangbanna are sugar, machinery, building materials, cigarettes, and electronic hardware. Imported goods include from honey, medicinal herbs, preserved food, farm products, forestry products and minerals.<sup>161</sup> Xishuangbanna's cross-border trade was worth 222 million *yuan* in 2001, an increase of 15 percent over the year 2000.<sup>162</sup>

If the open door policy has rapidly increased trade, investment and fostered the development of an export economy in 50 percent of the 27 poor border counties in Yunnan, there is good reason to believe that illegal trade has flourished along with legal trade. The large scale movement of people and goods involved in legal trade has made it easier than formerly to move illicit drugs. Customs inspection of commodities have been weak and ineffective in Yunnan. There have only been three commodity inspection centres in Kunming, Ruili and Wanding. Goods can easily pass across the border without being inspected or registered at numerous points along Yunnan's 4,060 kilometres rugged border with Burma, Laos and Vietnam. Particularly heavy Sino-Burmese border contact has complicated control of drug trafficking. The combination of massive drug production in the Golden Triangle and greatly expanded border trade have been major factors behind the sharp rise of drug trafficking within China over the last 25 years.

### **3. Ethnic Minorities in the Golden Triangle**

The ethnic minorities inhabiting the southwestern part of China have played a major role in fostering the development of the drug trade in the Golden Triangle. Cross-border trafficking by ethnic minorities combined with local corruption have facilitated the movement of heroin throughout the region in recent years. The southwestern part of China has been home to many ethnic groups, often living in remote and isolated mountainous areas. Yunnan is inhabited by 24 ethnic minority groups, comprising one-third of the population. According to *Yunnan sishi nian* (Yunnan's Forty Years), 79 of Yunnan's 127 districts, or 61 percent of the province, are minority autonomous districts.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Eng, *Royal Dutch Geographical Society*, 54.

<sup>162</sup> 'Simao, Xishuangbanna he hekou bianmao yu guoji datong dao jianshe kaocha baogao' (An Investigation Report on Border Trade and Construction of Great International Passages in Yunnan), *Yunnan shehui kexue* (Social Sciences in Yunnan), no. 6, December 2001, 43.

<sup>163</sup> The major minority groups that live in the Yunnan Province are the Yi (10 percent), Bai (3.6 percent), Hani (3.3 percent), Zhuang, Dai, Miao, and Hui.



Due to shared border areas, religious beliefs, customs, festivals traditions, intermarriage, identical spoken and written language, tight controls have been difficult. Since people on both sides of the borders belong to the same minority group making trade possible, trade has been easy to maintain. The expansion of the Manchu Empire after 1664 resulted in the southward migration of ethnic minorities from China that can still be found in many Southeast Asian countries. In the eighteenth century, hill tribes such as the Hmong and the Yao were pushed further west and south by Han migration, gradually moving throughout the highlands of mainland Southeast Asia. The political and social upheavals experienced by China during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including the Taiping Rebellion, the Nationalist Revolution, World War II and the Communist Revolution, accelerated the process. As these minorities scattered and settled, they brought with them the practice and techniques of farming the opium poppy. The major hill people of the Golden Triangle today comprise of the Haw (Chin Haw), Hmong, and Yao; the lesser tribes include the Lisu, Kachin and Lahu who settled on the border of Burma and Thailand. Many live in the hilltop villages and practice 'slash-and-burn agriculture'.<sup>164</sup> In order to reduce the complexities of this study, I focus only on the Haw and the Hmong.

### 3.1 The Haw

The Haw, also know as 'Chin Haw' or 'Chinese Haw', are the traders of the Golden Triangle and the hill tracts which separate Yunnan from mainland Southeast Asia.<sup>165</sup> Many Haw have maintained connections with remnants of the Kuomintang army, which fled China for Burma after the Chinese Revolution in 1949. They consider themselves Chinese, and are categorised in two distinct groups: the Muslim Chinese or *Hui*, and non-Muslim Chinese or *Han*.<sup>166</sup>

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See *Yunnan sishi nian* (Yunnan's Forty Years), 97.

<sup>164</sup>For further readings on the Yao minority group, see Hjorleifur Jonsson, 'Yao Minority Identity and the Location of Difference in the South China Borderlands, *Ethnos*, vol.65, no. 1, 2000, p. 56-82.

<sup>165</sup> They are known to the Burmese as Panthay, and to the Thai and Lao as Haw or Chin Haw. They are Chinese hill people and are distinguished from the 'Overseas Chinese' or *hua chiao* of Southeast Asia. Since the sixteenth century, the term 'Haw' has usually designated caravan traders of the mountain region. The majority of the 'Chin Haw' were Yunnanese Muslims and came to be referred as the 'Hui' by the nineteenth century.

<sup>166</sup> Andrew Forbes and David Henley, *The Haw: Traders of The Golden Triangle*, Asia Film House, Bangkok, 1997, 13.



Who are the Haw and what is their dominant role in the Golden Triangle? Where did the Muslims come from? Sop Ruak, where Burma, Thailand and Laos meet, is a long way from the Middle East by any standard.

The Muslims have long maintained trade links between Yunnan and Southeast Asia. Broadly speaking, the Muslim population of Yunnan can be categorised into three principle groups. The first are the descendants of Uighur military colonists thought to have inhabited the Zhaotong area in northeastern Yunnan since 1313. The second are those who live in the southeast around the Jianshui area and are descendants of Muslim refugees from the northwestern part of China, including Gansu, Ningxia, and Shaanxi. The last group are those who live in the southwestern region around Dali and are believed to be descendants of Sayyid Ajall and his followers.<sup>167</sup> Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din Umar Al-Bukhari (1211-1279) was appointed by the Mongol emperor to govern southwestern China. Sayyid Ajall promoted irrigation works, agriculture, rice farming, and forestry. Muslims were allowed to take local women as wives and were allowed to develop trade and commerce. It was at this time that the caravan trade to India and Southeast Asia became a monopoly for the Muslims. Muslim influence and commercial power of the Muslims in Golden Triangle and the Assamese trade routes were later expanded by his eldest son, Nasir al-Din.<sup>168</sup>

Travel between Simao in southern Yunnan and northern Thailand was also undertaken for trade purposes. Two principle routes existed. One was through Burmese territory, passing through Kengtung into the northern province of Chiang-Rai in Thailand.<sup>169</sup> A second route was more easterly, through Phong Saly Province in Laos and turning south to Luang Prabang Province before heading west to the Mekong River and the Chiang Khong region of Thailand.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Forbes and Henley, *The Haw: Traders of The Golden Triangle*, Asia Film House, Bangkok, 1997, 13.

<sup>168</sup> Forbes and Henley, *The Haw: Traders of The Golden Triangle*, 29.

<sup>169</sup> This was a more westernly route.

In fact today, Simao is a very important exporter for Yunnan. As noted in 'Simao, Xishuangbanna he hekou bianmao yu guoji datong dao jianshe kaocha baogao' of *Yunnan shehui kexue*, custom officers argued that Simao's export in the year 2000 was US\$12.18 million. This was an increased of 6.7 % compared to the year 1999.

<sup>170</sup> Forbes and Henley, *The Haw: Traders of The Golden Triangle*, 62. There have been arguments about the convenience of these two routes. One was in favour of the more easterly route via Nan and the eastern bank of the Mekong River. Other account suggested that the westernmost route via Kengtung was the best. Chiang Mai authorities and the Haw caravan traders have emphasised the advantages and disadvantages of the eastern route for several reasons. One was because the King of Siam did not allowed communication with the Kengtung people, who were subjects of Burma and were not trusted by the Thais at that time.

By the late eighteenth century and mid-nineteenth century, Yunnanese Muslims traded along the eastern frontiers of Tibet, through Assam, Burma, Thailand and Laos and into the Chinese provinces of Guizhou, Sichuan, and Guangxi. Among the goods that were traded to the south during the winter were fruit, nuts, carpets, brass utensils, salt and finished cloth which included cotton, wool and velvet. Goods that returned to Yunnan with the same caravan were opium, tea, raw cotton, gem-stones, and sometimes grain.<sup>171</sup>

Opium was cultivated throughout most of Yunnan by the mid to late nineteenth century. As Yunnan became a major producer, imports from British India to China gradually decreased. On the other hand, opium was also widely cultivated in the Shan States around Kengtung and opium produced there was exported to other Chinese provinces as well. Yunnan and Kengtung opium were extensively transported into Tonkin via the Red River (Lao Cai) caravan trail and into northern Thailand via Chiang Saen. The trade penetrated as far as Luang Phabang in Laos, Moulmein in Burma, Tali and Kunming in Yunnan, and Chiang Mai in northern Thailand.<sup>172</sup>

The Haws have drifted across the frontier from Yunnan and settled in the hills of Burma, Laos, and Thailand. By the early 1900s, many Chinese migrant labourers had migrated to the northern province of Thailand. Many were from Guangdong and Fujian and by the mid-nineteenth century had settled in Bangkok.<sup>173</sup> Illicit heroin is mostly produced in and along the borders of Burma and in Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son Provinces of Thailand by the Independent Chinese Haw. Subin Khuenkaew notes that on 14 September 2002, three Chinese Haw drug traffickers with 500,000 speed pills had been killed in a dispute between a drug caravan and the Thai Pha Muang task force in Chiang Dao district.<sup>174</sup> The group was declared to have joined the drug groups of a United Wa Army, in transporting drugs in Chiang Dao.

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<sup>171</sup> Forbes and Henley, *The Haw: Traders of The Golden Triangle*, 55.

<sup>172</sup> Forbes and Henley, *The Haw: Traders of The Golden Triangle*, 78.

<sup>173</sup> Ronald D. Renard, *The Burmese Connection: Illegal Drugs & The Making of The Golden Triangle*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1996, 14. Doi Wawi located in Chiang Rai's Mae Suai district is said to be populated with 20,000-25,000 people, mostly Chinese Haw and other hill tribes.

See *Appendix 2* for figure of Problematic Statistics on Opium Production in Northern Thailand, 1917.

<sup>174</sup> Subin Khuenkaew, 'Three killed in gun battle with Pha Muang task force', *Bangkok Post*, 15 September, 2002.

### 3.2 The Hmong

The Hmong, or Miao as the Chinese call them, are a scattered ethnic minority that dwells in the mountain regions of central and southwest China and beyond the national borders. The Hmong live in an environment which is favourable for poppy growing. As the Hmong moved south of the Chinese border, they acquired a new name 'Meo', which is rendered from the Chinese word, 'Miao'.<sup>175</sup> The Shan call them 'Meow' or 'Hka-meow', and in some districts they are commonly known as 'Che-hpok' or white-chinamen for their white clothes. It has been suggested that the Hmong originated as far away as Mesopotamia, that they may have descended from North Asian tribes or peoples from Caucasia and Mongolia who later settled in Southern China. Another opinion is that the Hmong long lived around the Yangtze River, spreading from there to Sichuan, Hunan, and Guangxi, and later to Yunnan.<sup>176</sup> Despite disagreements regarding about the origin of the Hmong, there is general agreement that they have long lived in Guizhou and Hunan, while those in Yunnan and Sichuan provinces are recent arrivals.<sup>177</sup>

Opium was an important cash crop for the Hmong and other hill tribes in China. Apart from the consumption of vegetables by boiling, the Hmong were able to exchange opium for salt, needles, clothes, thread, kitchen utensils, flashlights, guns, radios, silver and kerosene lanterns. It is said that during the 1950s, opium could be sold to purchase rice that would last up to seven months of the year. Opium was also used in exchange for silver, which plays an important role in marriage and transmission of wealth from one generation to another. Marriage payments or bridewealth could be as much as US\$ 750, which could not be saved without trading in opium. Without opium there would be no silver, and consequently little chance of getting married in the Hmong community. As Nicholas Tapps observes:

Opium doesn't go looking for money. Money comes looking for opium. And those who bring it are traders who have never effectively been suppressed.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> William Robert Geddes, *Migrants of the Mountains: The Cultural Ecology of the Blue Miao (Hmong Njua of Thailand)*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976, 29.

The Hmong call themselves 'Hmong' or 'Mong'. They dislike the name Miao because it means "rice shoot".

<sup>176</sup> Bunthorn Orndam et al., *Chiwit -Bon Sendai khong 13 PhaoThai* (Life of the 13 Hilltribes in Thailand), Dorkya Ltd., Bangkok, 1994, 70.

<sup>177</sup> Geddes, *Migrants of the Mountains: The Cultural Ecology of the Blue Miao (Hmong Njua of Thailand)*, 25.

<sup>178</sup> Tapp, *The Hmong of Thailand*, 24.



Opium is important in other ways. The Hmong use opium as a means of obtaining pleasure and recreation, as well as for medicinal purposes. Opium is used to relieve pain, particularly by those with serious illness and where there is an absence of health facilities in the highlands, but Hmongs are aware of the dangers of addiction. While some believe it is an effective treatment for snake bites, opium is not regarded as 'very important' in the treatment or cure of disease, due to fear of its poison.<sup>179</sup> Opium is also used for religious purposes by shamans, to help them enter a trance. This is very common in Meto in northern Thailand.<sup>180</sup>

Their long history and involvement of opium consumption makes it hard for minorities such as the Hmong and Haw to adopt the new attitude that producing and selling opium is a crime in the eyes of both the national and international communities. Long-established traditional use of drugs and integration of them into social codes make it difficult for the local hill tribes to accept the fact that opium must be regarded as evil. As one refugee from Burma stated, "This is the only medicine we have."<sup>181</sup> Moreover, the growth of the international heroin trade has presented new opportunities for earning high incomes, so it is not surprising to see the involvement of poor minorities and farmers in drug trafficking.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The Golden Triangle and the province of Yunnan have long been a major grower of opium poppies. More recently, the area has become a producer of heroin processed from opium harvested there. It is a place where the bricks of opium paste were traded for cash and gold bars, hence of the name "Golden Triangle". Since the decline of opium production in China during the 1950s, there has been a problem of market supply. Heavy involvement by local tribal people and the Han Chinese resulted in increased production in the Golden Triangle, which rapidly replaced supply from China. As the economy of China developed, with growing cross-border trade and investment, notably between the southwestern provinces of China and Southeast Asia, the movement of heroin became associated with international crime groups. Heroin use in North America and Europe has become popular again and

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<sup>179</sup> There has been a case that opium was used as a mean of suicide. The most common case has been those of women who do not want to get married or have quarrelled with their husbands.

<sup>180</sup> Tapp, *The Hmong of Thailand: Opium People of the Golden Triangle*, 15.

<sup>181</sup> Rupa Chinai and Rahul Goswami, 'Health-Asia: Golden Triangle Heroin Trade Fuels HIV/AIDS', *Inter Press Service*, 28 April, 1997.



producers in northern Burma have responded to increase the heroin demand, making China a transshipment point as well as a market for illegal narcotics.

Transport and government enforcement in the Golden Triangle have often been inefficient. This has created favourable conditions for drug dealers and warlords. Also, with the open door policy in place, cross-border trade has become easier for both legal and illegal commodities. Since ethnic minorities such as the Haw and the Hmong have maintained a cultural tradition of drug use as noted above, it would be unexpected were they not to take advantage of the new opportunities. For such people to regard opium production and consumption as crimes requires a big change in outlook. International drug trafficking, and the violence and corruption associated with illicit distribution networks, will be discussed next.

## Chapter 5

# International Drug Trafficking

Since the prohibition of narcotics in the 1920s, alliances between drug brokers and intelligence agencies have protected the global narcotics traffic. Given the frequency of such alliances, there seems a natural attraction between intelligence agencies and criminal syndicates. Among all the institution of modern society, intelligence agencies and criminal syndicates alone maintain large organizations capable of carrying out covert operations without fear of detection.<sup>182</sup>

-Alfred McCoy (*The Politics of Heroin*)

### 1. Introduction

Within the last decade, China gradually became one of the biggest victims of international drug trafficking. Drug production and drug dealing have become substantial sources of revenue for criminals, and the development of the drug trade has entailed a significant growth in illegal activities, especially the formation and development of criminal organizations for drug trafficking. China's role as a major participant in international criminal activities has coincided with the country's emerging position in foreign investment and the global economy. Drug turnover represented approximately 8 percent of international trade and an estimated US\$120 billion were laundered through banks in 1997.<sup>183</sup> Since this is the case, can one argue that the rise of international drug trafficking has been an integral part of increased economic development and growth? Or has this been rather a pathological development, the result of the rise of corruption, lack of law enforcement, social inequality, moral decline, or simply the desire for more money and power?

The drug trade has long involved both the state and private sector, both directly or indirectly. Involvement of the state in prohibited narcotics ranges from direct support for drug production and trade, to imposing taxes, controlling personal behaviour and regulating drug

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<sup>182</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*, Lawrence Hill Books, New York, 1991, 15.

<sup>183</sup> Tom Carnwath, *Heroin Century*, Routledge, New York, 2002, 193.

trafficking by protecting favoured dealers.<sup>184</sup> In the case of China, it is important to recall that the Opium Wars were caused by British state-sponsored opium trafficking, that local warlords (including those in the Southwest) regularly relied on income from opium to fund their armies and administrations, and that at least some elements of the KMT, before and after 1949, were involved in the drug trade. The CIA is a late but important example of unofficial or covert-official state involvement in the drug trade during the 1950s and 1960s. In the mountains and borderlands near Yunnan, opium warlords have maintained protection for their opium cultivation by establishing their own armies and alliances with secret agencies or brokers. The CIA allied itself with heroin dealers in Laos and Chinese druglords in Burma. Covert operations along the border of China and support for a KMT invasion of southwestern China in 1951 were handled by the CIA. When the operation failed, the KMT military caravans continued to move Burma's opium exports into northern Thailand, where they were purchased by Chinese syndicates for domestic distribution and for the international market.

Protection and immunity from investigation may extend to an international level, as national police, national politicians, and intelligence organizations become crucial for operations in the global market. Sometimes, corrupt officials such as senior police and government official work with these drug networks in a 'private' capacity, in return for bribes or a share of the profits, as mentioned in the previous chapter on political corruption. Intelligence agencies may establish contact and limited cooperation with criminal organizations, for example, in port cities and on national borders. Chinese triads and other criminal organizations have also become very active among the overseas Chinese communities, giving Chinese criminal groups an international reach. This chapter examines the CIA's involvement in drug trafficking, as an example of state involvement in the drug trade and the crucial role of international Chinese criminal organizations and their impact on Chinese society globally.

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<sup>184</sup> McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*, 490. Close relations with major narcotic traffickers have been established whether this is the Nationalist China, Imperial Japan, Gaullist France, French Indochina, the Kingdom of Thailand, Pakistan or the United States.

## 2. The CIA in China and the Golden Triangle

The American CIA or Central Intelligence Agency, was established in 1947 to carry out intelligence activities to promote national security. In theory, its activities are directed by the President.<sup>185</sup> They have included counter-terrorism, monitoring adherence to non-proliferation treaties, defence, arms control, suppression of narcotics trafficking and international organized crime. Sometimes, however, in order to pursue one aspect of national security, it appears to have participated in activities which from another direction appear to subvert it. Drug trafficking is one of these. For the sake of clarity and emphasis, I will only explore the background involvement of the CIA in global drug trafficking, for this is relevant to our discussion of the drug trade and trafficking in the People's Republic of China and the Golden Triangle.

In the 1950s and 1960s, CIA involvement in the global drug trade was linked to the Cold War. The organization was involved in the fight against Communism and to this end made alliances and links with local warlords, many of whom were drug dealers. On the global level for instance, the CIA wanted to limit the expansion of the Soviet Union's influence in Eastern Europe. They wanted to prevent Communism from spreading and therefore got involved in the internal politics of Italy and France.<sup>186</sup> There is some evidence that the agency helped the leaders of Italian Mafia to seize control of power in Sicily and sent money to heroin smuggling centre in Marseilles. This was done to "assist" the "battle" against Communism.

In Southeast Asia, the agency proved to be important in terms of its covert action. The CIA mobilised troops against Communism in China and the agency became involved with the KMT when General Li Mi escaped from Yunnan into eastern Burma after the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949. (See also the discussion in *Chapter 4* above the reasons for the KMT involvement in Burma and its relation to the Golden Triangle and China.)

The agency provided support in the form of arms, ammunition and major supplies to the KMT as a mean of resistance against the Chinese Communism.<sup>187</sup> There is evidence from

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<sup>185</sup> See *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents* by William M. Leary.

<sup>186</sup> McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in The Global Drug Trade*, 18.

<sup>187</sup> 'A Tangled Web: A History of CIA Complicity in Drug International Trafficking', *Congressional Record*, Institute of Policy Studies, United States, 1998.



a Burmese intelligence officer that in 1951, the CIA C-46 and C-47 aircrafts made five parachute drops a week to KMT forces in Mong Hsat. With these supplies, the KMT were able to establish training and base camps near the border of China. It was also observed that American pilots of Civil Air Transport loaded opium back on their flight to Bangkok. There can be no doubt that the CIA was aware that its allies were involved in the trafficking of drugs. In late 1952, after abortive attempts to invade China, the KMT suspended its drive against Communism and started occupying territory in the Shan States, between the Salween River and the China border, including Kokang, Wa, and Kengtung States. These were areas of large-scale opium cultivation. As opium cultivation in Yunnan declined during the 1950s, the KMT expanded illicit drug production in the Shan States. Sometimes, Chinese men married women from the hill tribes, for example, the Lahu, to secure their opium dealing, maintain control and establish close contacts within the villages. As stated by Alfred McCoy:

The KMTs took over the control and administration of circles (districts) and village tracts. They started opening up revenue collection centers, and local people were being subjected to pay gate-fees and ferry fees, on entering their occupied area. Custom duties were also levied on all commodities brought into their territories for trade. The taxes were collected in kind as well as money...By means of threat and coercion, these KMT aggressors forced the local inhabitants to comply with their demands.<sup>188</sup>

The CIA maintained close ties with the Hmong communities, many of whom were opium poppy cultivators.<sup>189</sup> It has been estimated that a secret army of approximately 30,000 Hmong was used to fight against the Communists in Laos near the border of North Vietnam in during 1960-1975.<sup>190</sup> This indicates that the CIA was heavily dependent on troops from tribal leaders and warlords in the region. Since the CIA wanted to keep the tribal leaders in power, they not only allowed tribal leaders to continue their opium cultivation provided but also supplied air transport. This was apparent in 1971 when the Hmong officers loaded opium on the CIA helicopter *Air America* and nothing was done. The information given to Alfred McCoy by General Su Yang, a Laos District Officer, showed that American helicopters and pilots regularly carried opium back and forth. As stated:

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<sup>188</sup> McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in The Global Drug Trade*, 172.

<sup>189</sup> The Hmong of Northern Lao were influenced by the French to change their cash crop to opium. This happened during World War II when the French promised to give the Hmong support in exchange for their opium cultivation.

<sup>190</sup> McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in The Global Drug Trade*, 18.

Meo [Hmong] officers ...came in American helicopters, perhaps two or three men at one time. The helicopter leaves them here for a few days and they walk to villages over there, then come back here and radioed Long Tieng to send another helicopter. They take the opium back to Long Tien.<sup>191</sup>

CIA involvement has also been confirmed by General Thao Ma, who was the former commander of the Laotian Air Force. General Thao Ma did not work with General Ouane Rattikone, refusing to transport opium for him.<sup>192</sup>

Evidence of the agency's participation in the heroin trade has been gathered in a US Congress publication as well. Alfred McCoy argues that experience in the subregion and findings from research have allowed him to come to several conclusions about CIA collaboration with the Hmong in Laos. He further notes that it was General Ouane Rattikone, former chief of the Royal Laotian Army, who personally revealed that he was in charge of the opium trafficking in northwestern Laos in 1962.<sup>193</sup> The general agreement about Rattikone was that he never denied or covered up his involvement in the drug circle, but also never actually admitted it. The CIA made no response when General Ouane Rattikone established a heroin laboratory.<sup>194</sup> It seems that even though the CIA were not associated with the buying of heroin or its production, they were implicated in the shipment of it, and CIA links with the tribal and local leaders involved expansion of the heroin business.

It has been argued that the CIA's actions helped to establish the huge network of heroin laboratories in the Golden Triangle, mentioned in *Chapter 4*. Some of the heroin produced there was exported to American troops in Vietnam. As argued by the *New York Times*, which published an extract from the CIA report, there were twenty-one opium refineries in the Golden Triangle. The most important refinery centres were located in Tachilek in Burma, Ban Houei Sai and Nam Keung in Laos and Mae Salong in Thailand. It has been noted that three of these were managed by allies of the agency, for example, Ban Houei Sai was controlled by the Royal Lao Army (and owned by General Rattikone), Nam Keung commanded by the chief of CIA for northwestern Laos and Mae Salong was looked

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<sup>191</sup> *Foreign Assistance and Related Program Appropriations*, US Congress, United States, 1973, 722.

<sup>192</sup> *Foreign Assistance and Related Program Appropriations*, 722.

<sup>193</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 267.

General Ouane Rattikone controlled international drug trade through different agents in Bangkok, Saigon, and Hong Kong. He maintained his own trademark '999' for branding his goods, including morphine blocks. '999' means 99.9 percent pure as in the standard of gold. However, Southeast Asian morphine at the time was not 99.9 percent pure but only 50 percent pure. See *Foreign Assistance and Related Program Appropriations*, 722.

<sup>194</sup> Booth, *Opium: A History*, 257.

after by the Nationalist Chinese who fought for the agency in Burma.<sup>195</sup> Seven of the twenty-one opium refineries were capable of manufacturing 90 to 99 percent pure Heroin No. 4.

Allegations of its involvement in the drug trade have been denied by the CIA, as reported in the US Congress publication, *Foreign Assistance and Related Program Appropriations* in 1973.<sup>196</sup> The CIA strongly rejected the claim that the agency supported heroin trafficking in Southeast Asia. The CIA claimed that the issue of narcotics is, in fact, important to the security of the United States. As stated by Richard Helms, the executive director of the CIA:

There is the arrant nonsense, for example, that the Central Intelligence Agency is somehow involved in the world drug traffic. We are not. As fathers, we are as concerned about the lives of our children and grandchildren as are all of you. As an agency, in fact, we are heavily engaged in tracing the foreign roots of the drug traffic for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. We hope we are helping with a solution; we know we are not contributing to the problems.<sup>197</sup>

Even though the role of the CIA's involvement in drug trafficking in Southeast Asia has attracted the attention of the media, the reports have been heavily focused on the 1950s-1970s. Books have been written about the CIA drug trafficking by former agents and pilots, such as *Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA* by Ralph W. McGehee, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* and *The Politics of Heroin-CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade* by Alfred McCoy. There have also been books on the agency's operation in other parts of the world, including *Cocaine Politics* by Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, *The Crime of Patriots* by Jonathan Kwitny, *The Big White Lie* by Michael Levine, *Out of Control* by Leslie Cockburn, and *Bluegrass Conspiracy* by Sally Denton.<sup>198</sup> These books testify to the continuing involvement of the CIA in the drug trade. However, they primarily focus on the organization operations in South and Central America rather than China and Southeast Asia.

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<sup>195</sup> Alfred McCoy, 'Third World Traveller', *Progressive Magazine*, August 1997.

<sup>196</sup> Indeed, there has been disagreement on the CIA and Ralph W. McGehee argues in his book *Deadly Deceits: My 25 Years in the CIA* that the CIA is not an intelligence agency, rather it is an anti-intelligence agency. The CIA produces only information wanted by the policymakers to support their plans and suppress information that does not support those plans. McGehee further notes that the CIA supports the covert action of the President in terms of foreign policy.

<sup>197</sup> *Foreign Assistance and Related Program Appropriations*, 721.

<sup>198</sup> Rodney Stich, 'CIA and DEA Drug Smuggling', *Unfriendly Skies: Saga of Corruption*, chapter 19, <http://www.druggingamerica.com/> [Accessed 1 July, 2003]



As far as CIA involvement in drug trafficking in China and Southeast Asia during the 1980s and 1990s is concerned, studies have been limited and there is little information available. I am not sure whether this is because the CIA has ceased to operate in the area or because relevant information has been covered up. However, since the goal of the CIA has been to protect American security and to oppose Communism, and China is still a communist country, it could be argued that the organization would find it no more difficult than formally to justify efforts to undermine China, and if necessary use drug trafficking for that purpose. For what would a rise in Chinese power mean for the United States?

Although the United States has repeatedly stated that it welcomes the rise of China, it is at the same time watching China's emergence carefully. As stated by Richard Haass, State Department Director of Policy Planning Staff at the National Committee on US-China Relations in New York on December 5, 2002, "The United States is also watching expectantly to see whether China uses its emerging power to create global opportunities for economic growth, a peaceful international order, and personal freedom."<sup>199</sup> There is little doubt that the US sees China as the main obstacle to global hegemony. As Frank Ching in the *Business Times* of March 13, 2003 put it:

The United States must and will maintain the capability to defeat any attempt by an enemy to impose its will on the US. Our forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States. There it is, in black and white. The US will see to it that no country can ever equal its military power, not to say surpass it. Today, the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence. It intends to stay that way.<sup>200</sup>

The United States has been competing with China for influence in Southeast Asia. Since China has been supplying the United Wa force with weapons for its fight against other ethnic groups in the region, the United Wa has in turn provided help by constructing a network of roads that would allow China to gain land access to ports in Burma. This would

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<sup>199</sup> 'US Wants Shared Values/Shared Interests with China: Director of Policy Planning Staff Richard Haass Speech December 5, 2002', *US Department of State International Information Programs*, <http://usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/uschina/haaschina.htm> [Accessed 10 July, 2003]

<sup>200</sup> Frank Ching, 'The rivalry under the friendliness', *The Business Times*, 26 July, 2003.



make it easier for China's navy to dominate maritime sectors, not only in the South China Sea but also in the Bay of Bengal and the Straits of Malacca.<sup>201</sup>

The above observations highlight that the emergence of drug trade coincided with the long-term involvement by the government and state agencies. The long term-strategic interests of nations can be viewed as much more essential than countering the international drug trade. The agency's alliance with the Third World brokers have in fact, linked new production areas to the global market. Involvement of the CIA in the drug trade is just a corrosive example of drugs being used to gain 'higher' political goals, a tactic used formally by the British and French governments, Chinese warlords and the KMT, and some minorities. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that many nations have had close interactions with major narcotic traffickers. If the government has an active control over the drug trade, how can production and sales of drug and international narcotics trafficking be conquered? Since allegations of connections between drug dealers and state officials have become contentious, how can control ever be managed within the state? Can ordinary people's attitudes ever be changed?

### **3. International Chinese Organised Crimes and Heroin Trafficking**

How is organised crime related to drug trafficking in China, Southeast Asia and the international community? One line of argument is that the existence of criminal organizations, especially Chinese criminal organizations, has helped international drug trafficking to flourish. The opposing argument is that it is the massive profits to be made from drug trafficking that have encouraged the proliferation of international criminal organizations. It is most likely that both are correct, that causality has been running in both directions.

In much popular discussion, it has been asserted that the emergence of the international Chinese organised crime is a particular manifestation of Chinese culture. Chinese organised crime groups include 'triads' in Hong Kong and Chinese 'tong' and 'gangs' in the United States and elsewhere. Triads are secret organizations that exist for criminal purposes. They not only originated in Hong Kong. Mainland societies also known to

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<sup>201</sup> 'US-China rivalry in Asia drug war: Increased military involvement in projected in Thailand', *WorldNetDaily*, 7 August, 2001.

be active in Hong Kong are the Ching Group and the Big Circle. Those of Taiwanese origin include the United Bamboo, the Four Seas Gang, Tien Dao Mon and Chao Tong.<sup>202</sup> 'Tong' are legitimate business associations in large Chinese communities. Many do not become involved in illegal activities, but some associate themselves with illegal gambling. Some historians argue that tongs are have been known to direct enterprises such as drug trafficking, robbery and 'people smuggling' and often align themselves with gangs for support. 'Gangs' generally consist of young men engaged in independent criminal activities; sometimes, however they also work for tongs and triads organizations.

Modern triads trace their history to secret political societies formed in China during the seventeenth century to overthrow the Ching Dynasty and to restore the Ming Dynasty to power. Their operations became international when Chinese migrated to Southeast Asia, Europe, Australia and North America.<sup>203</sup> Refugees and overseas Chinese such as workers and peddlers turned to triads for help, whether in the form of protection or maintaining law and order within their local territories and communities. Triad associations were often seen as a place where people could find support if they were discontented or discriminated against by the foreign culture, by well-established Chinese elites living abroad, or other ethnic groups. A general assumption has been that triads, gangs and tongs originated with those who were unable to be assimilated in the dominant culture and became avenues through which Chinese were able to express their needs and achieve their political or economic goals.

One recent concern has centred on the impact on Chinese organised crime of the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997. Did it encourage them to shift their operations to a new environment? It appears the triads have been expanding their networks where large numbers of Chinese communities exist in Canada, the United States, Australia, and the Netherlands, but it is impossible to say how much this is due to the incorporation of Hong Kong into the People's Republic. Is it possible that Chinese criminal groups are seeking new locations because they fear the Chinese criminal law system? Does this mean that places like the United States and Canada are seen as more lenient than Mainland China?

Benjamin Liu argues in *The Hong Kong triad societies before and after the 1997 change-over* that triads and Chinese criminal organizations have settled in Canada, including

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<sup>202</sup> See *Asian Organised Crime: the new international criminal asian organized crime: hearings before the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress, second session, June 18 and August 4, 1992*, United States Committee on Governmental Affairs, Washington, 1992, 89-101.

<sup>203</sup> *Handbook of Organised Crime in the United States*, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 1994, 234.

major triads such as the 14K, Kung Lok, Lotus, Jung Ching, Red Eagles, and Gum Wah. These groups have maintained strong ties with their groups in Hong Kong and worldwide. Heroin No. 4, known as China White in Southeast Asia, was responsible for a large number of deaths in Vancouver in the mid-1990s.<sup>204</sup> Liu argues that the number of triads increased because immigration from Hong Kong to Canada became easier when the Sino-British Joint Declaration for Hong Kong was signed in 1985 and Canadian immigration policy changed in 1993. It has also been suggested by Canadian police that Chinese smugglers and criminal groups tend to operate from Canada because Canadian penalties for violating drug laws are not as heavy as those in the United States.

According to an article in the *BBC News* on June 14 1999, 28 suspects and 54kg of heroin were seized in Vancouver. Most of the Vancouver heroin seizure came from a Chinese vessel in the city's harbour. Reports showed that most of the suspects were from Vancouver area, but the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also charged gang members from New York, Las Vegas and Puerto Rico. It appears that the gang had operations which stretched from Burma to Vancouver, and represented a serious heroin threat.<sup>205</sup> The report commented that "A million containers pass through the port every year, but police and customs officials only manage to search 3% of the vessels...They have long complained that they are fighting a losing battle against the heroin trade."<sup>206</sup>

The influence of Hong Kong triads has extended globally. In the Philippines, the triads have become a big concern because the Philippines has been turned into a major transshipment zone for international drug trafficking. For instance, police seized 91 kilograms of 'ice' in 1995 from a member of a Hong Kong triad, believed to be a member of the 14K Triad. A member of the triad was shot while delivering 'ice' in San Juan, the Philippines, on May 4, 1995. Another Hong Kong triad member was found guilty and shot for possession of 140 kilograms of 'ice' found in the boot of his car.<sup>207</sup> Hong Kong triads have also become a primary target in New Zealand, where the most active criminal groups during the 1950s were the 14K, Sun Yee On and Wo groups. In Australia, the triads have become principle targets of the Australian Law Enforcement Agency and in Macau, Cambodia, Indonesia, Hungary,

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<sup>204</sup> Benjamin T.M. Liu, *The Hong Kong Triad Societies before and after the 1997 Change-over*, Net e-Publishing, Hong Kong, 2002, 164.

<sup>205</sup> 'World: Americas Vancouver drugs ring smashed', *BBC News*, 24 June, 1999.

<sup>206</sup> *BBC News*, 24 June, 1999.

<sup>207</sup> Liu, *The Hong Kong Triad Societies before and after the 1997 Change-over*, 189.



and Netherlands, they have been involved in illegal gambling, money laundering, people smuggling, drug trafficking and pornography.<sup>208</sup>

From the above information it is impossible to judge whether the Hong Kong triads have been responsible for most or all Chinese organised crime in recent years. Because Hong Kong triads are large and extensive, they have been blamed for everything. However, not all Chinese crime is committed by triads and we have to keep in mind that there are also ethnic Chinese gangs from Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, and Mainland China.<sup>209</sup> Also, even if international crime is committed by ethnic Chinese from Hong Kong, they may not be members of triads. Individual may join together to commit crime ‘independently’ or establish partnerships with established ‘professionals’ in the field. They are promoted by experience, expertise, wealth, contacts, and networks. Committing a drug crime is just like participating in a business enterprise. The Chief Superintendent of the Royal Hong Kong Police has observed:

The popular belief is that all drug trafficking is run by triads. That is not so... Triad membership is neither a prerequisite nor an advantage. It is experience, expertise, contacts and money that count, and once involved there are no triad boundaries. A Sun Yee On will happily join a 14K member working for a ringleader with no Triad affiliation...<sup>210</sup>

The general conclusion has to be that there is no evidence of a marked changed in criminal activities following the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, though we can say that the triads have established their own area of influence in the drug trade. While Western countries have been concerned about a rise in criminal activities by ethnic Chinese, there is no evidence that it is Hong Kong triads that have been behind it. Nevertheless, it is likely that the ethnic Chinese criminal organizations will continue to build up their power in the overseas Chinese communities, which could lead to fights for territorial control and further illegal acts. It is also likely that as part of globalisation and increased in the tourism, larger numbers of Chinese will go overseas and participate in illegal as well as legal activities. Their possible involvement in the international drug trade has to be seen in that context.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> For further reading on the triads activities, secret societies, and early history, see *The Hong Kong Triad Societies before and after the 1997 Change-over*.

<sup>209</sup> Yiu-Kong Chu, *International Triad Movements: the Threat of Chinese Organised Crime*, Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, London, 1996, 13.

<sup>210</sup> Chu, *International Triad Movements: the Threat of Chinese Organised Crime*, 17.

<sup>211</sup> *Asian Organized Crime: the new international criminal asian organized crime*, 224.



Chinese communities in the United States have already expanded as a result of the *Immigration and Naturalisation Act of 1965*. In New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston and Chicago, gangs and tong are believed to have become more prevalent and it is assumed that they maintained ties with criminal crime groups in China and Taiwan. In various parts of United States and Canada, officials have been disturbed by the criminal organizations' activities and Asian and Chinese police units have been established in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Monterey Park, New York, Vancouver and Toronto. In New York, for instance, 'Group 41' or the Asian Heroin Group has been specially set up by the Drug Enforcement Administration to fight Chinese drug crime. Law enforcement units targeting Chinese gangs are also to be found in cities like Chicago, Boston, Oakland, Dallas, Houston and Virginia. Special task forces have been established by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service in New York, Washington, Boston, Houston, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. All these resources have been directed against problems associated with Chinese offenders.<sup>212</sup>

To keep the issue in perspective, one has to keep in mind that relatively little is known about organised crime in Mainland China, as a research topic it is still in a primary state. The same may be said of Chinese organised crime in Hong Kong, Macau, America, and other Western countries. There is reason to believe that understanding of the nature of the problem and how it might be addressed had been hampered in Western countries by lack of knowledge of Asian languages and cultures, resulting in frequent communication breakdowns.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Consideration of China's role in the area of drug trafficking since the 1980s cannot ignore the fact that heroin produced in Burma is being transited through the southwestern province of Yunnan. For example, recently a routine check on a truck in Yunnan led to the discovery of 673kg (1,480 pounds) of heroin and the arrest of 21 people, 12 of them from Hong Kong. Figures also show that seizures of heroin in China doubled in 2001 to around 13 tonnes, along with almost five tonnes of the drug 'ice', also smuggled in from Burma.<sup>213</sup> Since the 1990s, heroin sold in Hong Kong has been transported through Yunnan and Guangxi Provinces into Guangdong Province, and later transported across the border into Hong Kong for local consumption. On May 17, 2002, police in Yunnan discovered 357 kilos

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<sup>212</sup> *Asian Organised Crime: the new international criminal asian organized crime*, 214.

<sup>213</sup> Duncan Hewitt, 'China smashes heroin ring', *BBC News*, 5 February 2002.

of heroin hidden in timber headed for Hong Kong.<sup>214</sup> Such evidence suggests that Yunnan is an important link in drug smuggling countries around the world, with heroin being transported to other parts of China and to major international markets of North America, Europe and Australia.

It is clear that during the twentieth century Yunnan has changed from being a major opium producer to a major distributor and consumer. Heroin that has been transited in southern China through either Yunnan or Guangxi Provinces is transported to Guangdong, to the cities of Xiamen and Fuzhou in Fujian Province, or other Chinese southeastern coastal areas or port cities, and later to the international markets.<sup>215</sup>

The issue discussed in this chapter give an idea of how complicated drug matters are and how difficult it is to address them effectively. As we have seen, there is evidence that CIA has been involved in the drug trade of southwestern China and the Golden Triangle region. This is but one example of a long series of the state interventions in the drug trade, from colonial powers to warlords and the KMT. When governments are involved in producing or trading in drugs, can the drug problem ever be solved? This is especially demanding when state involvement coincides with local cultures in which the production and use of drugs, particularly opium, is regarded as normal and socially acceptable. Why should a Hmong or a Haw trader or a Han Chinese, be persuaded that opium or heroin production is wrong when it has long been viewed as blameless by local norms and even government agencies regard it as a lawful way of making money?

How to fight drug trafficking also becomes complicated as drug networks expand internationally. Even if the Chinese government had the necessary resources and expertise to tackle the problem internally, it would not be able to achieve much alone. While Chinese nationals and ethnic Chinese living overseas are involved in the international drug trade, they are not the only ones. To address the problem internationally, genuine international cooperation and commitment on the part of the international community are needed. The various policies implemented for drug control, and possible steps for reducing the drug problem will be discussed in *Chapter 6*.

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<sup>214</sup> Jaime, FloCruz, 'China's messy drug war escalates', *Cable News Network (CNN)*, 17 May, 2002.

<sup>215</sup> 'Drug Intelligence Brief: China Country Brief March 2002', *US Drug Enforcement Administration*, <http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/pubs/intel/02009/02009.html> [Accessed 10 August, 2003]

## Chapter 6

# Drugs and Public Policy

There is a beautiful photo of a young actress who became addicted before the film she was shooting was finished and ended up dying. Ironically, the film was meant to reveal the destroyed lives of actors and actresses addicted to drugs.<sup>216</sup>

-Ding Mo (*China Daily*)

### 1. Introduction

Drugs are a big problem which penetrates every aspect of the Chinese society, locally, nationally, and internationally. 'Illicit drug' activities could not have existed without favourable factors and the People's Republic of China serves as an outstanding example for this study. While opium poppy cultivation has not been a serious problem in China since 1949, when compared with the major drug source the Golden Triangle, since 1978 heroin has proved a major disaster for the Chinese people. Historically, anti-drug campaigns in China have involved intensive activity and severe punishments over a limited period.<sup>217</sup> These actions may be viewed as a method for reducing drug-related illegal activities in the short term, rather than a systematic response to the complex causes of the narcotics problems. The evidence suggests that this approach does not work, for the problem has continued to grow.

Eradication of the illegal drug problem requires both short-term and long-term plans. Short-term goals include the prohibition and suppression of the production and selling of illicit drugs. The long-term goals are to wipe out drug problems entirely.<sup>218</sup> However, to achieve this the Chinese government needs more than the enforcement of drug control laws; educational, social and economic initiatives are also necessary. Responsibility for drug education and prevention must be extended to schools, the workplace, neighbourhoods,

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<sup>216</sup> Ding Mo, 'Narcotics-Good Riddance!', *China Today*, vol. 47, no. 10, October 1998, 19.

<sup>217</sup> Liu and Situ, *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, 50.

<sup>218</sup> 'Zhongguo jiangwei quanqiu xing jindu zuo gongxian' (China Will Support the Global Anti-narcotics Effort), *Xinhua News Agency*, 8 June, 1998.

villages, and the family. Initiatives have to be supported and monitored by international authorities, law enforcement officers, lawyers, police, physicians, teachers, sociologists, and psychologists, but in the end it is action at the family and community level that matters most.

The issue of local management is a major obstacle where there is limited communication, few suitably trained staffs able to provide support, and resources limited and unevenly distributed. Lack of basic data on certain geographical area and population groups are also an impediment to effective action. In remote and isolated hill areas, for instance in the Greater Mekong Subregion and the undeveloped areas of Yunnan, the lack of skilled personnel is often acute. It is difficult to attract teachers and other professionals when salaries are low and sometimes are paid late or not at all. This has resulted in low enthusiasm, high absenteeism and staff turnover.<sup>219</sup> Minorities too, have been neglected when decisions about political and social issues are made; they have been hindered from participating in policy discussions, programs and project interventions.<sup>220</sup>

As argued in the previous chapter, to solve the drug problem, the Chinese government cannot work alone. International help and cooperation is essential. Anti-drug policies are different in China, the United States, and Southeast Asian nations that are the source of most of the drugs. To some extent, different approaches may be appropriate in varying social, political and economic conditions. However, international coordination is also necessary in the fight against drugs, and for the past few decades China has been an active participant in the international effort. The following discussion considers possible approaches in the eradication of drugs in the People's Republic of China, focusing on factors and issues which I have found to be important.

## **2. China's Approach to the Drug Problem**

### ***2.1 Drug Control***

In recent years, China has tried to extend and strengthen its anti-drug policy. Before 1990, drug trafficking was not categorised as a specific type of crime. Drug trafficking instead fell under economic crime, and penalties for economic crime were not

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<sup>219</sup> 'Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in The Greater Mekong Subregion', *Asian Development Bank 2003*, [www.adb.org/GMS?Projects/reta-5794.asp](http://www.adb.org/GMS?Projects/reta-5794.asp) [Accessed 20 June, 2003]

<sup>220</sup> 'Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in The Greater Mekong Subregion', *Asian Development Bank 2003*.



clearly defined. This meant that penalties for drug-related offences were often lenient.<sup>221</sup> Only the most serious drug offences were subject to the provisions of the PRC Criminal Code. The *Decision on Prohibition of Narcotics*, which came into effect on December 28, 1990, made it easier to impose the death penalty because it allowed provincial courts to sentence drug traffickers. As a result, executions increased. The amount of drugs in possession that allowed officers to arrest drug addicts was reduced from 2 kilograms to 1 kilogram for opium and 100 grams to 50 grams for heroin.<sup>222</sup> Persons in possessions of these amounts were subject to fifteen years of imprisonment, with proportionally shorter sentences for lesser amounts. Measures were also introduced against those who conceal goods for criminals or withhold the source of illegal property; they can be sentenced to criminal detention or a fixed-term imprisonment for up to seven years.<sup>223</sup>

Another notable initiative was the *Narcotic Drug Control Act* in 1997. This was enacted in conjunction with the Drug Administrative Law of the People's Republic of China. Its aim is to control narcotic drugs, and maintain safe practice in respect to narcotics in the fields of education, medicine and research.<sup>224</sup>

Despite these initiatives, drug control enforcement has not been effective in recent years. While legal measures may be helpful in limiting the amount of harm drug use and trafficking cause to individual and society, they do not address the causes of drug abuse. Also, although most of the resources spent on drug control are directed towards law enforcement through the police, the judiciary and the penal system, they may ignore factors such as inadequate training and widespread corruption.<sup>225</sup> These need to be specifically addressed.

It appears there is wide public support in China for the idea that the best way to solve the drug problem is to impose capital punishment upon drug traffickers and those who are involved in drug-related crime.<sup>226</sup> Some would argue that addicts should not be rehabilitated, but rather should be punished. It is difficult to see how such draconian measures could help to

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<sup>221</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drugs Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 133.

<sup>222</sup> *Joint Hearing Before the Committee on the Judiciary and the Caucus on International Narcotics Control of the United States Senate*, 15.

<sup>223</sup> See 'Decision on the Prohibition of Narcotic Drugs', *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/legal\\_library/cn/legal\\_library\\_1992-01-22\\_1991-62.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/legal_library/cn/legal_library_1992-01-22_1991-62.html) [Accessed 27 May, 2003]

<sup>224</sup> 'The Narcotic Drug Control Act', *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/legal\\_library/cn/legal\\_library\\_1997-11-19\\_1997-66.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/legal_library/cn/legal_library_1997-11-19_1997-66.html) [Accessed 2 July, 2003]

<sup>225</sup> See 'China tries former police chief for graft', *Cable News Network (CNN)*, 27 February, 2001, and 'Police Officer Faces 13 Million Yuan Corruption Charge', *People's Daily Online*, 25 January, 2002, for further readings on police corruption, involvement in good smugglings, and bribery.

<sup>226</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drugs Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 134.

reduce the harmful effects of drugs on society; they could result in brutalisation of society that would aggravate the problems rather than cure them.

## 2.2 Corruption

As noted above, official corruption is a hindrance to effective drug control. Since 1979, the Central Committee of Supervision and Discipline of the CCP has been responsible for the investigation and punishment of officials for criminal behaviour. The criminal justice system, including the Prosecution Department of China, also has jurisdiction over officials who have been disciplined and punished by the party. According to the Chinese Criminal Law of 1979, officials who make use of their power and position for bribes are to be sentenced to jail for no less than five years and in 1982 changes were made by the National Congress to impose capital punishment for more serious cases.<sup>227</sup> In 1999, the Prosecution Department of China spelt out strict procedures, 41 pages long, for investigating government officials who are thought to be deviant or corrupt. An Anti-Corruption Bureau of the Yunnan Provincial People's Procuratorate was set up in April 1990. The bureau manages investigation on corruption, misappropriation of public funds and the concealment of deposits outside the country.

Another area that requires attention is police corruption. Police may protect drug street dealers if they are paid enough for their services, resulting in the loss of public respect and confidence for the police. Chinese police have been subject to the Police Law since 1995, but there continue to be concerns about improper and illegal action by police. More effective, internal and external supervision systems need to be devised, including supervision by People's Congresses at various levels.

Wei Jianxing, secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection argued that major corruption cases peaked during 1993-1997, and have started to decline in recent years in Beijing. Mayor Liu Qi, at the National People's Congress, asserted that by the 2008 Summer Olympic Games China would be free of corruption and further stated that, "All the major preparations will be made public on the Internet, and the process of preparations

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<sup>227</sup> Lening Zhang, 'White-Collar Crime: Bribery and Corruption in China', *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, edited by Jianhong Liu, Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2001, 32.

will be made transparent.”<sup>228</sup> Also important will be the introduction of the ‘Sunshine Policy’, which requires officials to declare all private interests to the government, including activities such as building or purchasing a property, sending children to study abroad, or arranging weddings for their children.

### 2.3 Education

In order to reduce illiteracy, the quality and quantity of education in China needs to be increased. Education participation, especially by girls, should be encouraged in poor and rural areas. Financial burdens on poor families need to be eliminated and adequate education provided should derived from public funds. According to the *China Human Development Report*, the State Education Commission and the Ministry of Finance initiated a National Project for Implementing Compulsory Education in Poor Areas. Under this program, education was promoted during the years 1995-2000, with the total funding estimated at 10 billion *yuan*.<sup>229</sup> Funds were spent on training school teachers, principals, and staff, supporting school construction, and buying teaching materials and equipment.

Special educational efforts have been made in Yunnan to fight drugs. For instance, drug enforcement officials were invited to give special lectures and videos on drugs were shown to students in Longling Middle School in Yunnan.<sup>230</sup> Public trials in schools were also conducted. Students who were caught for smoking had to pay a fine of 2 *yuan* and attend a study session. A hefty fine between 100 and 300 *yuan* was imposed if the same students were caught twice. This was because the school viewed smoking as a preliminary step towards heroin use. In this way, both the students and parents were alerted to the need for particular concern over drug problems. But action in a few locations is not enough if education is to make an effective contribution. Resources have to be distributed and applied

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<sup>228</sup> ‘Sunshine Policy to Fight Corruption in China’s Capital’, *People’s Daily*, 13 March, 2002.

See also, ‘China Vows to Curb Corruption with Olympic Projects Construction: Official’, *People’s Daily*, 10 March, 2003.

<sup>229</sup> *CHDR*, p. 45.

Of the 10 billion *yuan* funding, 3.9 billion was from the central government and the remaining fund was from local government. This fund was extended to 592 poor counties listed under the National 8.7 Program for Poverty Elimination.

See *Education Development in China’s West: Policies and Projects* by Halsey L. Beemer.

<sup>230</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drugs Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*, 138. The response was in accordance to the survey conducted in 1994 by Yongming Zhou, author of *Anti-Drugs Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building*.



throughout China. The Chinese government has not had a national strategy for drug and HIV education.

## **2.4 Social Efforts**

### *Increasing Public Awareness*

One of the simplest and most effective aspects in China's drug policy is raising public awareness. Lessons learnt in one place have to be retained and shared, so that the entire public can become aware of the harm drugs pose for the Chinese nation. Through various media such as the press, magazines, films, radio and television programs, drug information has been widely conveyed to the public.

Exhibitions have been one fundamental approach by the Chinese government. This approach was particularly prominent during May to late June in 1998. Some Chinese were completely unaware of the impacts of drugs; they knew nothing about the in harmful effects. For example, the public was generally ignorant of how the HIV virus is spread, and the role in it of intravenous drug use. The proportion with any knowledge was less than 15 percent according to the *World Policy Journal* in 2002.<sup>231</sup> Anti-narcotic exhibitions such as that held at the Chinese Military Museum in Beijing have aroused sensitive and emotional reactions from the public. The Beijing exhibitions was attended by 1.66 million people, on some days exceeding 20,000 visitors, according to the Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. The exhibition included factual information, statistics, real opium poppies, photographs of drug addicts who died from AIDS as a result of sharing needles, and details about the problems caused by drugs and how addicts are rehabilitated.<sup>232</sup>

However, efforts in promoting public awareness, like school-based education, have been patchy and inconsistent. Sometimes national and provincial authorities have tried to suppress information rather than circulate it and encourage open discussion about narcotics and AIDS.<sup>233</sup> According to the *BBC News* in 2001, the Chinese authorities have prevented a 76 year old doctor, Gao Yaojie, from travelling to the Washington DC to receive a humanitarian award for her work on health and human rights at the annual Global Health

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<sup>231</sup> Kurlantzick, *World Policy Journal*, 75.

<sup>232</sup> See '166 wan ren ci canguan quanguo jindu zhanlan' (1.66 Million People Visit the National Antinarcotics Exhibition), *Xinhua News Agency*, 30 July, 1998.

<sup>233</sup> Kurlantzick, *World Policy Journal*, 74.



Council Conference.<sup>234</sup> Another example involves the novel *Shanghai Baby* by Wei-Hui. The Chinese government burned 40,000 copies in April 2000 because it touched on the issues difficult in Chinese culture, particularly female independence, and sexuality, themes of which the Chinese government disapproves. In other instances, while stories about AIDS /HIV cases were published in Chinese newspapers and magazines to commemorate World AIDS Day, none of the stories concerned Chinese cases.<sup>235</sup> The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) case also has revealed a reluctance on the part of Chinese authorities to make information about problematic issues publicly available. The number of deaths was understated, either as a result of misclassification or internationally, the World Health Organization concluded.<sup>236</sup>

It is therefore difficult not to assume that the Chinese Communist Party attempts to rule the people by maintaining control on the state-run media. This has been done by withholding information, blocking web sites, filtering the Internet, and banning or interrupting trusted information sources such as *Google* or the *BBC* websites. The Chinese government in fact, has always believed that they can solve the problems immediately by themselves and that the more informed people are, the more difficult it is to maintain control. However, covering up information on drug epidemics, AIDS and SARS can result in a serious costs in lives. The Chinese cultural use of drug and ancient attitudes towards them have been discussed earlier in *Chapter 2*. This has resulted in many false beliefs and lies about drugs. Awareness raising campaigns must be carried out throughout out China and must penetrate into the remote areas of Yunnan and Guangxi, where local villages and farmers lived. China needs to launch educational campaigns to raise the public's awareness of the virus. Only then can the people's beliefs and behaviour be changed.

### *Rehabilitation*

Under Chinese law, rehabilitation of drug addicts has been made compulsory.<sup>237</sup> Investigation and registration of drug addicts has been carried throughout China.

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<sup>234</sup> Dr Gao is retired gynaecologist who began campaigning about AIDS in 1996, using her pension to help fund educational material. However, the Chinese authorities refused to approve her passport application and had accused her of working for anti-China forces.

'China Bars Aid Activist Visiting China', *BBC News*, 31 May 2001. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/1362119.htm>.

<sup>235</sup> World AIDS Day is December 1. The theme is 'refuse drugs, and prevent AIDS'.

<sup>236</sup> For further information on SARS and its impact on Asian economies, see Chang Ching-hsi, 'The Economic Impact of SARS', *Exchange*, no. 69, June 2003, 32-35.

Rehabilitation can take different forms, ranging from confinement and compulsory treatment to lectures, legal and moral education, strict behaviour modification, and participation in various sports and labour programs. Those who fail to rehabilitate are sent to 'reeducation-through-labour centres' which are managed by judicial departments.<sup>238</sup>

The Chinese government has introduced a number of provisions relating to drug addicts and rehabilitation programs. For instance, the *Procedures for Compulsory Drug Addiction Rehabilitation* was initiated by the State Council in 1995. These deal with administration, construction of rehabilitation centres, rehabilitation measures and welfare provisions.<sup>239</sup> The *Guiding Principles for Commonly Used Therapies to Opiates Addicts* and the *Procedures for the Control of Pharmaceutical for Drug Addiction Treatment* aim to set a standard level for rehabilitation throughout China. The *Regulations on Forcible Termination of Drug Use* were issued in 1995, and making it compulsory for drug addicts to receive treatment.<sup>240</sup> The Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China reports that in the year 2000, China had approximately 746 compulsory rehabilitation centres and 168 treatment and 'reeducation-through-labour centres'.

In places like Kunming, rehabilitation has been managed by the local communities themselves. An outstanding example is the community on Wuguo Road in Panlong district in Kunming which includes 500 households. Once a member of a community is found to be addicted, a small committee or group will be formed, including local policeman, parents of the addicts, and officials from the Public Security. The self-established committee will monitor the drug addict's behaviour, give advice, and persuade the addict to quit and rehabilitate.<sup>241</sup> The committee will also be responsible for finding suitable jobs for the drug addict after rehabilitation has been successfully managed. Another interesting initiative in Kunming involves traditional herbal medicine. Instead of relying on methadone, a heroin substitute commonly used to ease withdrawal, addicts receive only herbal capsules of its local

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<sup>237</sup> According to Professor Han Jisheng of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and researcher at the Nerve Science Research Institute (Beijing University College of Medicine), acupuncture is believed to help in the rehabilitation of drug addicts. The use of low frequency electric pulses to stimulate points is said to restore drug addicts to normality and the percentage of drug addicts turning back to drugs can be reduced to approximately 70 percent. See 'Acupuncture Points Work for Drug Rehabilitation', *China Today*, March 2003 <http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/English/20023/focus.3.htm> [Accessed 11 April, 2003]

<sup>238</sup> *Narcotics Control in China*, 20.

<sup>239</sup> *Narcotics Control in China*, 21.

<sup>240</sup> Liu and Situ, *Crime and Social Control in a Changing China*, 48.

<sup>241</sup> Certain sorts of actions may hinder rehabilitation efforts. Sometimes, people have move out and migrate to urban areas. This makes it hard to keep track of drug addicts. In other cases, the family may be too ashamed to admit that a member of a family is addicted, making it hard to extend help.

invention.<sup>242</sup> Other provinces have also established their own community-based rehabilitation centres, including those in Guangxi, Inner Mongolia and Guizhou.<sup>243</sup>

However, despite these measures, rehabilitation generally has not been successful in China. A principle factor is the lack of sufficient funds, which leads to inadequate rehabilitation facilities and inadequate skills. It is likely that rehabilitation has been more successful in certain areas where funds have been more readily available, for example in Beijing, but not in a remote province like Yunnan. Sometimes, unofficial rehabilitation centres have been established. These are centres without official support and are usually of low quality and standard.<sup>244</sup> The generally low standards of rehabilitation reflect China's slow progress in coming to grips with drug issues. Examples of poorly conducted centres include the centre in Baoshan, where addicts were chained up and had to sleep in smelly crowded rooms on dirty floors with no beds, and no medical assistance was on hand. In other places, like Dehong Prefecture in Longba Township of Longchuan Country, addicts were confined in wooden cages three metres long and one metre wide.

Another factor in the generally low standard of rehabilitation programs in China is the lack of centres provided by non-government and international organizations.<sup>245</sup> Because most of the rehabilitation centres are government run, punishment and treatment of addicts have not been kept separate. This makes it difficult for addicts to come to regard rehabilitation in a positive way. More non-government drug treatment centres need to be set up to help provide voluntarily advice and supervision.<sup>246</sup>

In other countries, some rehabilitation programs have been particularly successful. What is needed above all for a program to work is a friendly supportive network, where the addict are well informed, protected and loved as they return back to their communities. For example, in Thailand, the *Buddhakasettra Foundation* in Chiang Mai works with drug abuse issues, providing vocational skill training in weaving and chicken raising, and other income generating activities as well as support in overcoming the addiction. Addicts are also given

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<sup>242</sup> Joe McDonald, 'Chinese Fights Heroin Habits with Herbal Medicine', *Jade Campus*, <http://www.jadecampus.com/News/AP20June99.htm> [Accessed 2 August, 2003]

<sup>243</sup> The private sectors has also made contributions to rehabilitation program. The Yunnan Tin Company, for example established its own rehabilitation centre for drug addicts. Drug addicts and their parents have to pay a deposit of 200 *yuan* under a contract to be rehabilitated. Penalties and fines will be imposed if the drug addicts failed to fight their addiction.

<sup>244</sup> Zhou, *Anti-Drugs Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History and State Building* 139.

<sup>245</sup> However, there are groups such as the Communist Youth League Organization, trade unions and women's associations that are actively involved.

<sup>246</sup> Kurlantzick, *World Policy Journal*, 74.



both formal and informal education and religious instruction. The *Duang Pratep Foundation* is a program that seeks to train youth leaders to become familiar with drug abuse issues through the 'New Life Project' in Bangkok. Activities include sports competitions and awareness raising campaigns, involving parents and families. In 2001, the puppet show of the *Duang Pratep Foundation* was demonstrated on the UNDCP training program. The *Konkuat Group* teaches young people how to enjoy themselves and be free from drugs and crimes. The project will target secondary schools, but also primary schools students, as many students in primary schools already use drugs.<sup>247</sup>

In South Australia, *DrugBeat* is a successful rehabilitation program, which aims to rebuild the addict's self-esteem and self-confidence. Under *DrugBeat* program, each person is treated as an individual rather than as a drug addict. They receive broad assessment and opportunities, detoxification, reintegration and maintenance. Close counselling and support programs are provided and family members become involved in the rehabilitation process. The centre is noted for a 100% success rate in detoxification and approximately 78% success for long-term treatment, on an annual budget of around \$1 million.<sup>248</sup>

### **3. Policies toward Ethnic Minorities: China & Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)**

Narcotic control in China requires cooperation between the different ethnic groups throughout China. China has made sure that all minority groups have maintained regional autonomy, with substantial control over their own areas and internal affairs. The *Chinese Government White Paper* states that at the end of 1998, there were five autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures and 120 autonomous counties, and 1,256 ethnic townships.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup>See 'Krongkarn Lerk Soop Fin' (Anti-Opium Smoking Program), *ADRA Thailand*, <http://www.adra.or.th/thai/projects/drug.htm> [Accessed 13 July, 2003] The ADRA Projects in Thailand have been established for almost five years. The main aim of the program is to help rehabilitate drug addicts and ethnic groups in the province of Phetchaburi. During the first round, fifteen people were sent to the rehabilitation centre for one month, with a 70 percent success rate. On other rehabilitation programs in Thailand, see 'Primary Prevention of Substance Abuse: Local partners Thailand', *World Health Organization*, [http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/undcp\\_who\\_initiative/thailand.shtml](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/undcp_who_initiative/thailand.shtml) [Accessed 30 June, 2003]

<sup>248</sup>G. Humphries, 'Newsroom: \$1 Million Boost to War on Drugs: Reclaiming Lives and Reducing Crimes', *Canberra Liberals*, <http://www.canberraliberals.org.au/newsroomdet.asp?ItemID=503>, [Accessed 15 August, 2003]

<sup>249</sup>'National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China: Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities', *Government White Paper*, Information Office of the State Council of the Peoples Republic of China, Beijing, 2000. Despite rapid national growth and numerous poverty relief programs, there still exists ethnic discrimination in China. Is there specific or deliberate discrimination toward certain minority groups through either formal or



Minorities of the Greater Mekong Subregion also require strong attention. The 'Greater Mekong Subregion' (GMS) comprises of all six Mekong nations: Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province in the People's Republic of China.<sup>250</sup> The Mekong growth quadrangle includes parts of Yunnan, Burma, Laos and Thailand. Ethnic minorities in the GMS are diverse and, as discussed in *Chapter 4*, have been heavily involved in cross border trade and the flow of drugs from Golden Triangle.

Poverty and poor educational levels are important in our discussion of drug use, drug production, and trafficking among ethnic groups. There is a strong relationship between ethnicity, poverty, poor health and limited education. The lack of adequate income and living conditions are major factors that cause minorities to become involved in activities such as opium growing and drug trafficking, as mentioned earlier. The impact of recent economic modernisation and loss of communal facilities may have further to reduced health and educational facilities for poor minorities. Since poverty and education are the most significant indicators and are most relevant to my discussion, I have chosen to discuss them in detail in the following sections.

### ***3.1 Eliminating Poverty Among Ethnic Minorities***

The People's Republic of China considers poverty reduction as an important goal. Many of China's poorest people come from ethnic minority groups and a considerable number of them cope with their deprived economic situation by growing poppies, especially in mountainous regions of China. Although crops such as maize, melons, cucumbers, beans and rice are grown, opium provides a higher income. These hill people particularly grow opium because the crop provides them with extra cash to purchase needed commodities and household goods. Opium suits their needs. The crop was easy to grow and does not spoil. Since poppy plants have to be grown in high elevations, there is no competition from lowlanders, resulting in a secure livelihood.

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informal policies? Or is this a result of geographical factors and historical circumstances. Probably both are true to some extent.

<sup>250</sup> 'Greater Mekong Subregion', *Asian Development Bank* 2003, <http://www.adb.org/GMS/default.asp> [Accessed 30 June, 2003]

See *From Golden Triangle to Economic Hexagon-Recent Development Proposals for Regional Economic Linkages in Mainland Southeast Asia* by David Murray.

More than 100 million people from national minorities live in central and western China, where economic development is very much behind the eastern region. The government has directed more state and foreign investment to minority areas for water conservancy, power and communications projects. According to the *World Tibet Network News* in 1999, poverty alleviation programs were conducted during 1995-1998 in minority regions. This brought clean drinking water to 11 million poor people, and helped to bring the poverty rate in China's five minority autonomous regions down declined from 12.4 percent to 6.9 percent.<sup>251</sup> Development of infrastructure facilities in minority areas included new highways, roads that extended 69,000 km, and the opening up 667,000 ha of farmland.

Special funds were given to poor areas during the period from 1996 to 1998. The state extended 16.95 billion *yuan* in Central Government funds to 257 poor ethnic minority counties. Other measures included cooperation and help from international organizations such as help from the World Bank in poverty alleviation. The World Bank established a plan in 1995 that aimed to help the poor minority areas with a budget of US\$ 610 million. The program covered 43 poverty-stricken ethnic minority counties in Guangxi, Yunnan, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous regions, Guizhou, Qinghai, and other places.<sup>252</sup>

The issue of poverty is important also for the ethnic minorities that live in the Greater Mekong Subregion. The *Asian Development Bank* argues that in Thailand, the average annual income of ethnic groups of the hill is approximately one-twenty-fifth of the national average. The rate of poverty in Laos is high and poverty increases with the concentration and remoteness of ethnic groups.<sup>253</sup> There is little doubt that low literacy, limited education and poor health standards are all linked with uneven income distribution, poverty and attraction to opium as a cash crop. Sometimes, policies that target poor areas generally may not benefit local minority populations, who need programs targeted specifically at them. However, there are also problems with poverty-alleviated programs more generally, as stated in the *United Nations Development Program Poverty Report* for 2000:

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<sup>251</sup> 'China admits ethnic conflict, poverty among minorities', *World Tibet Network News*, 27 September, 1999

<sup>252</sup> See 'More Poverty Relief Goes to Ethnic Minority Areas', *People's Daily*, 22 October, 2001.

<sup>253</sup> 'Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in The Greater Mekong Subregion', *Asian Development Bank* 2003.

Much of the success of national poverty programmes rides on "targeting" benefits to the poor. But most programmes still assume that external agents deliver the benefits and that the poor are passive beneficiaries - the traditional safety net or social welfare model. Little wonder that the poor often complain that they never see the benefits - while delivery agents complain that poverty persists despite their good intentions and scientific methods.<sup>254</sup>

One of the ongoing plans in the GMS is the human development strategy, aimed at reducing poverty and increasing in labour productivity. Under the GMS Program, the GMS countries are giving priority to areas such as the development of resources for higher education, better access for ethnic minorities to education and training, and other basic social services. Health care and control of HIV/AIDS and malaria is another regional priority. Disease control has become increasingly urgent due to growing cross-border trade and population movement. This is a critical issue when one considers the spread of diseases such as AIDS.<sup>255</sup>

### ***3.2 Promoting Education Among Minority Groups***

As pointed out in *Chapter 2*, cultivation of the opium poppy has a long history in southwest China. Opium production was a customary local industry, and people remained ignorant of its harmful effects. In general, they were not educated that it was wrong to grow opium. It was common to use opium for medicinal, religious and recreational purposes, and while addiction was common enough, it was not until unrefined opium gave way to heroin that the addiction problem became intense.

Education is essential for the economic, social and cultural development of minority groups in reducing their involvement in opium production and consumption. One policy the People's Republic of China has introduced to improve education is bilingual teaching, enabling minorities to learn their own languages. Other developments include promoting ethnic schools and increasing funding. Since 1990 the Chinese government has added 4 billion *yuan*, approximately US\$483.68 million, to the annual education budget of ethnic

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<sup>254</sup> 'Overcoming Human Poverty', *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Poverty Report 2000*, <http://www.undp.org/povertyreport/exec/english.html> [Accessed 20 June, 2003]

<sup>255</sup> 'ADB's Role in the Greater Mekong Subregion Program', *United Nations Development Programme*, December 1999 <http://www.undp.org.vn/forums1/forums.htm> [Accessed 1 May, 2003]

regions to assist education.<sup>256</sup> China had 12 ethnic universities and institutes, 59 ethnic teachers' training schools, 158 ethnic secondary vocational schools, 3,536 ethnic middle schools, and 20,906 ethnic primary schools by 1998.<sup>257</sup> In Yunnan, where the economy has been underdeveloped and required special attention, the central government has extended extra financial support. Statistics from the *Yunnan jiaoyu bao* (Yunnan Education Report) indicate that in 1995, 103 out of 127 counties and cities received state financial support. Among the projects initiated for minorities by the Central government in 2000 were 'Comprehensive Quality Training Program for the Primary and Secondary Teachers in Ethnic Minority Poor Regions of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' and the 'Project for Helping Poor Regions in Compulsory Education'.<sup>258</sup>

The Ministry of Education argues that educational initiatives have been successful, noting that 51 per cent of the 700 counties with regional autonomy have eliminated illiteracy among young people who have completed nine-years of compulsory education. This is outstanding when compared to the situation in 1949, when 80 percent of minority people were illiterate.<sup>259</sup> *Table 10*, illustrates the development of education of ethnic minorities over the last fifty years. Decisions regarding the establishment of schools, type of local education programs, methods of school management, course contents, language of instruction and procedures for enrolment have been decided by the organs of self-government in the autonomous areas. Decisions have been made to suit the particular characteristics of the region as well as complying with the educational policies and laws of the state.

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<sup>256</sup> 'China Improves Education of Ethnic Minorities', *People's Daily*, 13 June, 2002.

<sup>257</sup> 'National Minorities Policies and Its Practice in China: Promoting the Common Development of Ethnic Groups, *Government White Paper*, Information Office of the State Council of the Peoples Republic of China, Beijing, 2000.

<sup>258</sup> See *Lessons in Being Chinese: Minority Education and Ethnic Identity in Southwest China* by Mette Halskov Hansen and *Ethnicity, Education and Empowerment: How minority students in Southwest China construct identities* by Maryjo Benton Lee.

<sup>259</sup> 'China Improves Education of Ethnic Minorities', *People's Daily*, 13 June, 2002.



**Table 10: Educational Development in National Minority Autonomous Areas in 1952 and 1998<sup>260</sup>**

Item	1952	1998
Institution of higher learning	11	94
Students in institution of higher learning (10,000 persons)	0.45	22.64
Secondary schools	531	13,466
Students in secondary school (10,000 persons)	20.94	529.64
Primary schools	59,597	90,704
Students in primary schools (10,000 persons)	467.31	1,240.90

Source: ‘National Minorities Policy and Its Practice in China: Promoting the Common Development of All Ethnic Groups’, *Government White Paper*.

Educational policies among the minorities in the Greater Mekong Subregion is also improving. According to the *Xinhua News Agency*, an elementary school been established on the border of China and Burma with financial aid of about 50,000 *yuan* from the police office of Jinghong City of Xishuangbanna in the province of Yunnan.<sup>261</sup> In Thailand, the *ADRA Project* has initiated the project ‘Krongkarn Sanap-sanoon Lae Songserm Darn Karn Siksa’ (Education Support Program), seeking funds for the support of local hill tribes and the unprivileged in the northern parts of Thailand, promoting drug awareness activities, providing infrastructure such as classrooms, water tanks and libraries. Even so, there still exist large inequalities.<sup>262</sup> The situation in Lao is similar. Although there have been increases in the number of primary school enrolments, illiteracy has persisted because it is very difficult to find teachers who are skilled and qualified in the very remote areas of the Greater Mekong Subregion. Isolation and a lack of familiarity with print and electronic media result in low

<sup>260</sup> We have to be cautious when relying on official statistics concerning illiteracy and school enrolment among ethnic minorities. Sometimes, the local government and school only reports the number of children in primary schools who ‘start’ and not those who ‘drop-out’. Those who have joined in a short-term literacy course are regarded as literate, while those who have not attended school but manage to read the local language in monasteries are classified as ‘illiterate’. Also literacy may not only mean the student is able to read Chinese, it may be that the ethnic students are literate in other scripts. See also Mette Halskov Hansen, *Lessons in Being Chinese: Minority Education and Ethnic Identity in Southwest China*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1999.

<sup>261</sup> ‘School for Drug Addicted Kids Established’, *Xinhua News Agency*, 20 June, 2003.

<sup>262</sup> ‘Krongkarn Sanap-sanoon Lae Songserm Darn Karn Siksa’ (Education Support Program), *ADRA Thailand*, <http://www.adra.or.th/thai/projects/education.htm> [Accessed 13 July, 2003]  
See also ‘Krongkarn Hai Kwam-roo Reang AIDS’ (AIDS Awareness Program), *ADRA Thailand*, <http://www.adra.or.th/thai/AIDS/education.htm> [Accessed 13 July, 2003]

motivation among the hill tribes. Adult literacy classes have often been hard to maintain, especially those carried out in Thailand.<sup>263</sup>

One of the projects completed by the *Asian Development Bank* was 'Study of Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in the GMS', approved on June 1998. Another project on health education, 'ICT and HIV/AIDS Preventive Education in the Cross-Border Areas', began in January 2003. The project, which has total funding of US \$1.85 million develop learning materials for highland minorities, and poor population and vulnerable groups.<sup>264</sup> Another notable program focuses on 'Preventing HIV/AIDS Among Mobile Populations in the GMS'.<sup>265</sup> Mobile populations have played a significant role in international drug trafficking as well as the spreading of HIV/AIDS, as noted in *Chapter 3*.

#### **4. The Han Chinese**

Migration of the Han into the Yunnan province has escalated over the past 20 years. The Han now dominate commerce and business, including the sex industry. According to the *UNICEF and HIV/AIDS in East Asia and Pacific Regional Office*, although much of the Jingpo (Kachin) and Dai population are seriously affected by HIV in Yunnan, the epidemic has spread to Han populations since 1989.<sup>266</sup> This was largely the result of blood transfusion, the sharing of needles, and prostitution. The epidemic spread from Ruili in Dehong to the prefectures surrounding Kunming, with an overall infection rate of approximately 50 percent. According to the survey conducted in Longchuan County, Yunnan in 1994, already mentioned in *Chapter 3*, drug taking among the Han increased during the mid-1980s and peaked during 1988, probably due to the increased availability of refined heroin. While an average Dai and Jingpo started using drugs at the age of 20 years, the Han Chinese tended to start one year earlier.<sup>267</sup> There is no clear evidence to explain this age difference.

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<sup>263</sup> 'Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in The Greater Mekong Subregion', *Asian Development Bank* 2003.

<sup>264</sup> 'ICT and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education in the Cross-Border Areas', *Asian Development Bank* 2003, [www.adb.org/GMS?Projects/reta-6083.asp](http://www.adb.org/GMS?Projects/reta-6083.asp) [Accessed 20 June, 2003]

<sup>265</sup> See 'Preventing HIV/AIDS Among Mobile Populations in the GMS', *Asian Development Bank* 2003, [www.adb.org/GMS?Projects/reta-5881.asp](http://www.adb.org/GMS?Projects/reta-5881.asp) [Accessed 20 June, 2003]

<sup>266</sup> 'China: The Epidemic', *UNICEF and HIV/AIDS in East Asia and the Pacific*, [http://www.unicef.org/eapro-hiv/aids/countries/china\\_epi.htm](http://www.unicef.org/eapro-hiv/aids/countries/china_epi.htm) [Accessed 17 August, 2003]

<sup>267</sup> Wu et al., *Addiction*, 1679

As with other minorities throughout Yunnan and the rest of China, some Han Chinese also require special attention from the Chinese government in handling drug problems. These are those poorer Han Chinese, with deprived living standards and low educational levels. In recent years, the Hans have become absorbed in the natural population, being involved with the drug trade, presumably since drug smuggling is an easy task with high income. Most triads and gang members are largely Han Chinese. Triads were in fact, historically part of the political resistance of the Han Chinese to the Manchu dynasty. How can the Han Chinese be controlled? Most of all, there is a greater need for massive public awareness on the drug epidemic, as well as increasing campaigns against official corruption. The development of the country is a challenge for everybody and this is especially true as cross-border movements bring in different kinds of people, but at the same time, negative consequences.

## **5. Cooperative Drug Policy Initiatives in Southeast Asian Countries**

Active roles have been adopted by China and Southeast Asian countries to combat illicit drug dealing and drug trafficking in the last decade. Hundreds of national, regional and international drug control organizations have worked together to establish plans and policies to fight drugs abuse and drug trafficking. Policy-makers of Southeast Asian countries, mainly the ASEAN group, and China have joined together to establish networks to increase cooperation.<sup>268</sup> China has signed more than 30 bilateral treaties with 24 countries, among them the *ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters (ASOD) Plan of Action on Drug Abuse Control* and the *UN Drug Control Program (UNDCP) Mekong Sub-Regional Grouping Action Plan*.

The *ASOD Plan of Action on Drug Abuse Control*, initiated in 1994 aimed at solving drug problems, particularly those arising from the Golden Triangle, with a particular emphasis on law enforcement aimed at reducing illicit drug supplies and production, on treatment and rehabilitation, and promoting drug education and further research. In 1993, the *UNDCP Mekong Sub-Regional Group Action Plan* similarly targeted illegal drug production and trafficking with China joining first with Burma, Laos, and Thailand, then in 1995 Cambodia

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<sup>268</sup> 'ASEAN and China Cooperative Operation in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) –Bangkok, Thailand, 13 October 2000', *Association of Southeast Asian Nations*, <http://www.aseansec.org/645.htm> [Accessed 10 July, 2003]



and Vietnam. The budget of the plan was US \$15 million, directed at law enforcement, the issue of drug-related chemicals, and ways to strengthening ethnic communities around the Mekong region.<sup>269</sup> By strengthening ethnic communities in accordance with their cultures, the welfare of the hill people, has been promoted in ways that go well beyond increasing resistance to drugs.<sup>270</sup> China has also recently joined the *ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs* (ACCORD), a program initiated by the United Nations in 2000. The goal of this plan is to make China a drug free zone by the year 2015.<sup>271</sup>

Increased inter-government control within the Mekong Region is another strategy that could lead to drug reduction in the Golden Triangle, as mentioned earlier in discussion of ethnic minorities. Some regulations and initiatives relating to the Mekong Region have been initiated in the province of Yunnan, for example an opium poppy control alternative development program, as outlined by Wu Shiyin from the Office of Narcotics Commission in 2003. This has been carried out in Burma and Laos by Yunnan Provincial Administrative Office for Opium/ Poppy Control Alternative Development Efforts in the Border Areas of Neighbouring Countries. A plan to develop a model replacement crop program in Shan State (Burma) has also been presented. There have been demonstrations of alternate crop such as lemon grass, vegetables, peanuts, castor, and safflower. This is being implemented by the Kunming Jili Economy and Trade Development Company.<sup>272</sup>

Examples of successful crop substitution programs can be found in Thailand. Thai farmers have to a great extent increased their income with crops 10 or even 100 times more profitable than opium in 2003. Markets gained new Thai products, at home and abroad. Under the Royal Project, King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand and the late Princess Mother (the king's mother) stated that opium poppy plants would not be destroyed unless satisfactory alternative crops existed. Immediate removal of the hill people's main source of income would put them in danger.<sup>273</sup> Successful crop substitution programs in Chiang Rai, the northern Thai province, have involved cool climate fruits and vegetables, including potatoes, cabbages, taro, tomatoes, red kidney beans and 'Doi Tung' coffee initiated by the *Doi Tung*

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<sup>269</sup> Chalk, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 98.

<sup>270</sup> For example in Thailand, the chance for villagers and hill tribal people to practice their culture began to re-established by the end of 1990. Local leadership promoted local culture, with indigenous textile and handicraft productions being encouraged. Educated tribes people have been encouraged to become local teachers, NGO workers, or engage in private enterprises. In Thailand, Thai citizenship has been extended to members of minority groups, and infrastructure and living standards significantly improved.

<sup>271</sup> The plan was supported by more than 30 governments and 15 International Organizations.

<sup>272</sup> 'Workshop on Drug Control Initiatives in the Greater Mekong Subregion', *Asian Development Bank* 2003, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/Mekong/Proceedings/hrd-drug.asp> [Accessed 30 June, 2003]

<sup>273</sup> Renard, *Opium Reduction in Thailand 1970-2000: A Thirty-Year Journey*, 76.



*Development Project*.<sup>274</sup> The 'Krong Karn Ran Kaffe Doi Tung' (Doi Tung Coffee Gallery Project) raises money for deprived hill tribes and coffee growers of northern Thailand.

Another principle target is the cross-border trade in drug-related chemicals. Chemicals necessary for the conversion of opium to heroin are produced and transported through neighbouring regions to the factories in Burma. The drugs that are manufactured move in the opposite direction. Under the *Memorandum of Understanding on Drug Control*, signed by China, Thailand, Laos, and Burma in 1993, cooperation is to be maintained on the issue of illicit cross-border trade. Cross-border cooperation has been difficult at times due to political, historical and security concerns, and the issue of national integrity. This plan thus seeks to promote efficiency in cross-border law enforcement, with priority being given to the border areas of China.<sup>275</sup> To make an impact on international crime, such cross-border cooperation is essential.

According to the *Mekong Working Group on Human Resource Development* (WGHRD), 36 projects were initiated to direct resources in the GMS concerning the areas of ethnic minorities, HIV/AIDS, and production of illegal drugs in 2002.<sup>276</sup> The number of projects and costs can be seen in *Table 11*. Assisting cross-border development has been the most significant concern, with an estimated cost of US\$ 83.2 million. This included a program to support opium crop substitution. Of the 32 projects providing technical assistance, ten have been to reduce drug use, HIV/AIDS and human trafficking, nine to support education policies and academic projects and others have to promote the health and education demand of various ethnic groups in the subregion.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Yuwadee Tunyasiri, 'US lauds Thailand for drop in opium poppy substitution: Crop substitution scheme a big success', *Bangkok Post*, 7 August, 2002.

See also, *Munnithi Mae Fah Luang Nai Phrabrarom Ratchuprathum: Doi Tung* (Mae Fah Luang Foundation: Doi Tung), <http://www.doitung.org/index.htm> [Accessed July 28, 2003] The *Doi Tung Development Project* was originally initiated by the late Princess Mother, Her Royal Highness Princess Srinagarindra on 1988. Doi Tung is a mountainous area of 150 square kilometres in Chiang Rai in the north of Thailand and is part of the Golden Triangle. Inhabitants are poor and have long depended on opium as their main cash crop. With the implementation of the royal project, aimed at rehabilitating the lives of the people living in the area, villagers received training in skills needed to grow new crops and to improve and market their handicrafts. It has been said that the per capita income increased from 3,772 *baht* to 12,155 *baht* and the goal for the year 2002 was to raise per capita income to at least 30,000 *baht*. The villagers now use their increased earnings to buy more and better food, clothing, radio and television sets and to improve their homes.

<sup>275</sup> 'Law Enforcement: East Asia', *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, [http://www.unodc.org/unodc/law\\_enforcement\\_eastasia.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/law_enforcement_eastasia.html) [Accessed 10 July, 2003]

<sup>276</sup> See 'Developing Human Resources and Skills Competencies- GMS Flagship Initiatives', *National Economic & Social Development Board*, [http://www.nesdb.go.th/data\\_index/area\\_dev/data\\_07/menu.html](http://www.nesdb.go.th/data_index/area_dev/data_07/menu.html) [Accessed 3 July, 2003]

<sup>277</sup> 'Developing Human Resources and Skills Competencies- GMS Flagship Initiatives', *National Economic & Social Development Board*.

**Table 11: Classification of Human Resources Development (HRD) Flagship Projects**

Project Classification	Loan		Technical Assistance		Total	
	Number	Amount (US\$M)	Number	Amount (US \$M)		
<b>Group 1</b> projects- Address cross- border HRD Issues	3	70.0	14	13.2	17	83.2
<b>Group 2</b> projects- Projects on academic and research networking	0	0	9	3.0	9	3.0
<b>Group 3</b> projects-Labour market cooperation	1	15.0	6	0.8	7	15.8
<b>Group 4</b> projects-ICT and technology development issues	0	0	3	6.9	3	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>108.9</b>

Source: ‘Developing Human Resources and Skills Competencies- GMS Flagship Initiatives’, *National Economic & Social Development Board*.

**6. The US and International Perspectives**

International cooperation in combating drugs has been necessary in recent years. The United States has become increasingly concerned with the drug issue in China and its relation to Southeast Asia during the last decade. Since China became a destination point and a transshipment location for Burmese-produced heroin, providing a route through Southern China to Hong Kong, Macau and other commercial and maritime centres, heroin is readily forwarded to other regions like North America, Australia, and Europe.<sup>278</sup> The amount of heroin trafficked from the Golden Triangle to the United States has increased in recent years.

One major approach by the US in controlling drugs in the Golden Triangle region has been through various international organizations. The three major ones are the United Nations

<sup>278</sup> Heroin has continued to be transported through Thailand in recent years, however, the number of heroin traffickers has dropped due to tighter border security. In Thailand, heroin moves from the north to Bangkok and to southern Thailand for export by air and sea.

Drug Control Program (UNDCP), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The UNDCP, which was established in 1991, initiates many programs aimed crop substitution and drug eradication in opium producing and transit countries. Improving legislation, reducing drug demand, and institution building are other principle targets of the UNDCP.<sup>279</sup> The INTERPOL, on the other hand, is concerned with the promoting police cooperation at the international level. This includes drug law enforcement, cooperation in information exchange between countries, and gathering information on illicit production and the distribution of narcotics. The FATF, founded in 1989, is primarily concerned with international money laundering, mainly from the sales of narcotics. The FATF works at both national and international levels to counter money laundering, formulating strategies and making recommendations.<sup>280</sup>

Bilateral cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the United States started in 1984, when contact between US and Chinese authorities was established through joint meetings. China has repeatedly sent delegations to attend international drug control meetings held by the United Nations, the International Criminal Police Organization, the World Customs Organization and the World Health Organization in 1984. The governments of the two nations signed the *Sino-US Memorandum of Cooperation in Narcotic Drugs Control* in 1987. The US Customs Service (USCS) has also provided training in narcotic control to Customs officers in Beijing.<sup>281</sup> Chinese delegations participated in the 17th and 20th UN special General Assembly sessions on drug control in 1990 and 1998. This signifies that the Chinese government was willing to take part in anti-drug policies initiated among the international community.

The *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report* states that the US and China enhanced their joint anti-drug control efforts in 2002. This was the result of visits by American officials to China, including the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in 2000 and the former Director of Intelligence of the ONDCP in 2001 as well. Good working relations have been established, leading to the first Sino-US intelligence-sharing meeting in October 2002 in Beijing.<sup>282</sup> Both the US and China officials have cooperate closely in terms of coordinating intelligence- sharing meetings and trans-

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<sup>279</sup> Chalk, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 100.

<sup>280</sup> Chalk, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 101.

<sup>281</sup> *Joint Hearing Before the Committee on the Judiciary and the Caucus on International Narcotics Control of the United States Senate*, 17.

<sup>282</sup> *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2002*, US Department of State, <http://www.state.gov/g/inl/rls/nrcrpt/> [Accessed 2 July, 2003]



national investigation, developing Chinese law enforcement capabilities and exchanging information on drug threats.

As mentioned, in the part low levels of law enforcement and poor coordination of effort have hindered narcotic control. Increased cooperation from the Chinese side is certainly important for improved joint investigation, enforcement, and gathering counter-narcotic intelligence. The opening up of China's narcotic effort for international cooperation is expected to contribute strongly to the investigations of the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Despite all the anti-narcotic programs and initiatives mentioned, success has not been as great as hoped. The shifting of trafficking routes by drug dealers has been one major obstacle.<sup>283</sup> Also drug trafficking methods vary from one region to another and determining factors include not only the transit countries, but also the method of transportation available and the ethnic groups that inhabit the region. Another obstacle is the sophisticated networks linking different organizations. Heroin trafficking operations are not run by single individuals, they involve various brokers, exporters, importers, and many intermediaries. This makes drug tracking and detection difficult because by the time authorities are alerted to the fact that heroin has reached a designated area, ownership of the drug product and shipment has changed. Therefore, officials find it difficult to obtain evidence of drug shipment and sale relationship between producer, distributor, and transporter.<sup>284</sup>

Despite China's increased international collaboration, there is still concern that the Chinese government is still not as active or as cooperative in international drug control as it should be. US officials have criticised China's refusal to sign a Letter of Agreement (LOA) that would allow the US to establish law enforcement training and technical assistance in China. Also, though China has been willing to share its drug samples with the US, the samples so far have been very limited.

In its relations with Burma, the US has been doing what it can to reduce drug production in that country, and reduce the amount of heroin entering the US. However, here too there have been obstacles. Cooperation between Burma and the US has been limited and

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<sup>283</sup>*Drug Control: US Heroin Control Efforts in Southeast Asia: Statement for the Record by Jess T. Ford, Associate Director, International Relations and Trade Issues, National Security and International Affairs Division, United States General Accounting Office, United States, 1996, 5.*

<sup>284</sup>*Drug Control: US Heroin Control Efforts in Southeast Asia, 6.*



the US has not provided assistance to Burma for combating narcotics. The major reason for this is Burma's bad record of human right violations and the Burmese government's negative attitude towards democratic government.<sup>285</sup> The low cooperation is evident from the 1988 incident when the US stopped foreign aid to Burma, including one of which included financial support for drug control programs.<sup>286</sup> The situation is complicated by the fact that most of the Burmese opium-producing region is not under the strict the control of Burmese authorities and that the Burmese military is deeply involved in the drug trade. This makes it difficult to track down trafficking patterns and criminal organizations.

The prospects for greater cooperation in drug control are poor unless the Burmese position on human rights and political participation shifts. One suggestion is that the drug issue should be put in the hands of an international taskforce. Rather than allowing military, political and economic conditions of Burma to stand in the way of serious drug control action, help and cooperation should be offered through the United Nations and other international organizations acceptable to Burma.

International support had also been available from the Thai side. In order to promote drug control, joint meetings have been held for police and law-enforcement officials. For example, police from the People's Republic of China attended training courses on law enforcement and counternarcotics at the US-Thai International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Bangkok on 2002.<sup>287</sup> Good cooperation has existed between the United States and Thailand since the early 1970s in terms of reducing opium production and heroin trafficking.

A notable incidence occurred in 1994 when Thai police were able to capture 10 leading members of Burmese heroin trafficking organization. This was with US support.<sup>288</sup> A more recent case in June 2003, involved the arrest of Mr. Laoda Sansi and his sons in the

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<sup>285</sup> *Drug Control: US Heroin Control Efforts in Southeast Asia*, 3.

<sup>286</sup> All international assistance was frozen, including assistance from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and IMF loans, UNDP economic development projects, bilateral assistance from Japan and other countries. See Andrew Bosson, 'Sowing Disorder: support for the Burmese junta backfires on China', *China Rights Forum Journal*, no. 3, 2002.

Also see Eric Tagliacozzo, 'Border permeability and the state in southeast Asia: Contraband and regional security', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 23. no.2, 2001, 254-274.

<sup>287</sup> *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2002*, 20.

<sup>288</sup> *Drug Control: US Heroin Control Efforts in Southeast Asia*, 4.

For details on US-Thai cooperation in narcotic control, see 'Tracoop Laoda Big Ya Sep-Thid' (The Big Leader of the Heroin Trade Caught), *Thairath Newspaper*, 13 June, 2003.

For other recent news of the drug-related cases in northern Thailand concerning ecstasy and 'ice' drugs, see 'Khao karn-jhabkoom ti nha-sonjai' (News on Interesting Drug Cases), *Samnagnan Khanna Kammakarn Phongkhan Lae Phrabphram Ya Sep-Thid* (Office of the Narcotic Control Board)

<http://www.oncb.go.th/document/c2-work19-1-03072501.htm> [Accessed 17 July, 2003]

northern province of Chiangmai in Thailand. This was the result of the combined efforts of approximately 50 Thai policemen and members of the *US Drug Enforcement Agency* based in Asia. Mr. Laoda Sansi and his group, who belong to the Lisu minority, were powerful dealers in the drug industry. They were caught planning to transport ‘ice’ tablets worth one billion Thai *baht* from Thailand to Cambodia, Europe and America.

## **7. Conclusion**

In recent years, China has established links with other countries to fight drugs, not only with the United States, but also Australia, Canada, France, Japan, and the ASEAN countries. Cooperation has taken many forms, involving international policing, international anti-drug information exchange, judicial cooperation, and programs for the social and economic development of ethnic minorities involved in drug production. This has resulted in some reduction of transnational drug-related cases.<sup>289</sup> In targeting drug problems, an attitude of flexibility and sensitivity has to be maintained since many countries and ethnic minorities are involved. Despite the various measures initiated among the Southeast Asian countries, much more will have to be done to prevent future problems. Since the Greater Mekong Subregion is changing socially, economically, and politically, drug eradication efforts have to be seen in that context.<sup>290</sup> Since each country may have their own problems and priorities, and their own reduction techniques, there has to be ongoing exchange of information and ideas. Only in that way can there be an overall understanding of what can be done and what cannot be done.

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<sup>289</sup> *Narcotics Control in China*, 34.

<sup>290</sup> ‘Workshop on Drug Control Initiatives in the Greater Mekong Subregion’, *Asian Development Bank* 2003

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

The main aim of this study has been to examine the scope of drug and drug problems in contemporary China, tracing historical roots and influences. Throughout the early history of China, drugs were seen as having more than medicinal value. In the Chinese culture, drugs were related to longevity, immortality, and religious objectives, as was also the case in some minority cultures. Opium was popular for relieving pain and increasing stamina. Opium was believed to heal the mind, reduce distress and anxiety, and alter the perception of an individual. Although opium had long been considered as a desirable drug, excessive usage and heavy medical dependence resulted in widespread addiction during the nineteenth century, as illustrated in the first chapter. Drug problems grew as the availability, production and distribution of local opium increased within China. This coincided with increasing foreign imports. By the beginning of the twentieth century, China was consuming ninety-five percent of the world's opium supply, as well as being its major producer.

Even though opium cultivation was suppressed during the early Republican Era, it was not strictly enforced until 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded. After the Kuomintang have been defeated by the Communist in 1949, opium cultivation persisted in the Shan State of Burma and the region of the Golden Triangle. The KMT had forced local inhabitants and hill tribes to pay taxes for their opium cultivation. Although the communist government had declared that opium cultivation and opium use had been eradicated in 1952, the activities, together with drug smuggling, continued in the remote areas of southwestern China. The ability of the Chinese government to police the border areas was constrained by the difficult topography and cross-border trade conducted by ethnic minorities. There was widespread drug smuggling throughout mainland Southeast Asia during the 1950s, though it is difficult to know what quantities entered the People's Republic.

The US Central Intelligence Agency was also involved, apparently on the grounds that it was fighting Communism. It supported the drug activities of warlords and high military as long as they seemed useful allies. The political instability and tensions of the 1950s and 1960s resulted in many different parties becoming involved in the drug trade. This included members of the Chinese Nationalist Kuomintang Army, Chinese warlords, Shan warlords, Lao officials, Thai generals, South Vietnamese leaders and Hmong leaders. The drug trade

prospered in the Golden Triangle, partly because of the weakness of the Burmese government. This led to sharp production of heroin in response to international demand. As China progressed with the economic reform in 1980s, the country became a major transit point of international drug trafficking, as well as a site of production and consumption.

The drug epidemic has had a profound impact on the social, economic and political sectors of China as well as neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. The global drug trade has undermined the political and social fabric of many countries and it is vital for us, to tackle the problem systematically as citizens and as nations. However as this study has shown, the difficulties are extreme.

Most important of all, the Chinese government has to strongly admit that drug use is a serious national problem. In a social environment with a long tradition of opium consumption and production, wide public awareness campaigns should be under-taken, not only on the most serious crimes, but also minor drug cases in remote regions of the southwestern provinces. The cases of HIV/AIDS and SARS have verified that a unified social norm on drugs has not been addressed due to the ignorance of the Chinese officials. Since the Chinese government has often been restricted by the public perception of being a drug-free nation and one with a high reputation, unpleasant information on issues like drug epidemic has been kept quiet. Sometimes, the fight for drugs has been carried out underground, perhaps by highly motivated groups, but without wide participation and sufficient financial resources. People's traditional attitudes on drugs have not been changed especially along the bordered areas of China and Burma, where drug dealing are still recognized as acceptable. Not until the attitudes of corrupted officials and the weakness of both external and internal controls are handled, can people's behaviour and drug crimes be properly managed.

Apart from promoting the economic and social development of the southwestern region, as noted in *Chapter 6*, closer international cooperation is required. Increasing drug dealings in the People's Republic suggests that China and the countries of the Golden Triangle, cannot handle the problem themselves. Since the national and international security has been weakened and has resulted in insidious and corrosive effects, global trade in heroin must be solved immediately to prevent further social, economic, political and health threats. Comprehensive commitments and obligations within the international communities concerning drugs are needed, and antinarcotic activities at all government levels must be improved. The examples of the CIA and the ignorance of the US participation in Burma's



drug affairs have undoubtedly demonstrated that political situation can seriously deter effective efforts in countering drugs. If cooperative initiatives were to work, they would require greater degree of political will in the international community. Only when there is a common adoption in fighting drugs, can substantial progress be made to curb drug problem in the People's Republic of China.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Education Index By Province 1995<sup>291</sup>

<i>Province</i>		<i>Education Index</i>	
Beijing	0.86	Shandong	0.74
Shanghai	0.85	Hubei	0.73
Tianjin	0.83	Sichuan	0.74
Liaoning	0.80	Fujian	0.72
Jilin	0.80	Henan	0.74
Heilongjiang	0.78	Shaanxi	0.73
Shanxi	0.79	Jiangxi	0.73
Guangdong	0.79	Ningxia	0.67
Hunan	0.75	Anhui	0.72
Guangxi	0.75	Guizhou	0.64
Xinjiang	0.75	Yunnan	0.64
Inner Mongol	0.74	Gansu	0.62
Jiangsu	0.77	Qinghai	0.57
Hainan	0.75	Tibet	0.36
Zhejiang	0.75		

Source: CHDR, 62.

Appendix 2: Problematic Statistics on Opium Production in Northern Thailand, 1917

Area	Area Cultivated (RAI)	Amount of Raw Opium	Metric Weight
Chiang Rai	1,000	100,000 tamlung <sup>292</sup>	6,000 kilograms
Nan	750	75,000 tamlung	4,500 kilograms
Den Chai	100	10,000 tamlung	600 kilograms
Total	1,850	185,000 tamlung	11,100 kilograms

Source: Renard, *Opium Reduction in Thailand 1970-2000: A Thirty-Year Journey*, 34.

<sup>291</sup> CHDR, 62. This table shows the inequality in the education component of the *Human Development Index* by province in China.

<sup>292</sup> A tamlung is equal to 4 *baht* in weight, or 60 grams. In the old system of weights and measures of Southeast Asia, 100 tamlung equals 1 viss, a term still used in Burma.

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